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Mode and Subjects of Baptism

EXAMINED,

IN

SEVEN SERMONS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A Brief History of the Baptists.

BY DANIEL MERRILL, A.M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN SEDGWICK.

Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth? NICODEMUS. JOHN vii. 51.

Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. JESUS CHRIST.

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TO THE READER.

Fellow Traveller to Eternity,

YOU and I are the offspring of God. The period of our return to him ſwiftly approaches. Then the motive I have had in writing, and which you ſhall have had in reading, will both be known. How, and how far the following pages will affect my preſent and future life, is with the LORD. How far they ſhall affect thine, is alſo with HIM. One thing is certain: the truth of what I have written will be ſoon known. You are willing to know it now, provided you know the value of the goſpel, and poſſeſs an heart humbled by its doctrines.

Reader, be not offended at what I have written, till you be ſure it is falſe. Do thyſelf no harm. Read, conſider, compare every part, and the whole, with divine truth, in ſuch a manner and ſpirit, as ſhall yield thee a pleaſing reflection in the world to come.

If the subject, as here presented, be true, it is a serious truth. If an error, it is a serious one. It nearly concerns the kingdom of EMMANUEL, to whose pleasure and mercy the whole is cheerfully resigned,

By, Reader,

Thy Servant,

For Jesus' sake,

THE AUTHOR.

SEDGWICK,
Dec. 27, 1804.

The Mode and Subjects of Baptism.

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SERMON I.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19, 20.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

IT hath pleaſed the Father of Mercies to beſtow on fallen man a revelation from heaven. In it is contained the ſcheme of grace, which brings life and immortality to light. It ſhows the way by which to eſcape the wrath to come, and to find the favour of God. All ſcripture is given by his inſpiration, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works.

Till the human heart be humbled, in meaſure, man feels not his need of divine teaching; nor will he make the ſcriptures the man of his counſel. But, my brethren, and people, it is doubtleſs the caſe, that many of you poſſeſs a willingneſs to have your principles and practice ſquared by the word and teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt. My text contains ſome of the laſt words of our great High-Prieſt. It is the general orders which he gave his firſt apoſtles, and left for the inſtruction, practice and comfort of all their ſucceſſors, to the end of the world. In the verſe which precedes my text, Chriſt informs us, that all power in heaven and in earth is given unto him. His words, therefore, are clothed with authority. May we hear, and fear, and be obedient. Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may ſay unto the King of Zion, What doſt thou?

So far as we be Christians, all that is necessary to enforce obedience is, to know what Christ would have us to do. Perhaps not a passage in all the oracles of truth contains more extensive instruction than do the words of my text. The commands are exceedingly broad; the Baptismal Institution comprehends all obedient disciples; and the comforting promise is durable as the world.

In my text, Christ Jesus, the Head of the church and Lord of all, constituted his present and succeeding disciples to be apostles unto all nations. It contains their commission, and general and particular orders. In it they are directed——

I. To go and disciple all nations.

II. To baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

III. He directs these newly constituted apostles, and all their successors, to teach their baptized disciples to observe all things whatsoever he had given in commandment.

Lastly. For their encouragement and comfort, he adds, And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

I suppose it will be expedient, and with me it is an indispensable duty, that I lay each of these propositions as fairly and as fully before you as I can. But I shall not observe the order in which they lie in my text, which is as I have just stated them. For I have many things to say unto you, in agreement with my text, but fear that you are not, all of you, able to bear them now. We shall therefore begin with the

II. Which contains Christ's command to baptize, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, those who shall be discipled of all nations.

Nor do I purpose to call your attention, at this time, to the whole which is implied in this proposition. But what I purpose is, to define a few words which appertain to the ordinance, and then collect the scripture account of baptism, with some other texts, which may throw light upon the subject. Afterwards, in discourses which may follow, I may produce evidence, that my definition of baptism is accurate and just; and show how the apostles and primitive Christians understood this matter, and how they practised. When this is done, it will be easily seen, what is the out-

ward and visible part of baptism; and then the purport, end and design of the institution may call for some attention.

Before I proceed to open, illustrate and confirm these particulars, I have several things to say unto you. For I wish you to attend to the subject without partiality and without hypocrisy. I pray God to remove darkness and all prejudice from your minds, that you may, indeed, come to the law and to the testimony of Jesus Christ in this matter.

You will consider me as under the strongest worldly inducements to continue to believe and practise as I have heretofore done; for should I, after mature consideration, be constrained to believe and practise differently, you will be released from all legal obligations to afford me any farther support; my relations will, the most of them, probably be greatly shocked, and displeased, at the report; many, whom I highly value as Christians, and numbers of them zealous preachers of the gospel, will, it may be, consider me as lost, and worse than lost, to the church and world: and, besides this, multitudes will, no doubt, say all manner of evil against me. All this being true, with a thousand other connected smaller evils, and nothing of a worldly nature in prospect, save what is contained in the promise of Jesus Christ, you cannot but conclude that I shall proceed no farther in this matter than I am obliged to, in following the Lamb of God whithersoever he goeth.

Having said thus much with respect to myself, I will still add, that, should a change in my belief and practice, respecting the subject on hand, bring me to a more full belief and practice of the truth, I shall, on the whole, be a gainer. But, should a change take place, and I be called to sustain all the evils which I may calculate upon, and after all be plunged myself into a hurtful and bewildering error, surely all the meek and lowly in heart would rather commiserate than revile me.

Another thing I would mention to you, so that the subject may, if it possibly can, meet your minds without prejudice. You ought not to fix your judgments, nor found your belief, upon the arguments or confessions of great and good men, any farther than such arguments and confessions are conformed with the scriptures of truth. Should we hearken to what the greatest and best of men have confessed and affirmed of the subject which we are about to consider, and

have our belief and practice correſponding with what they have written, the matter would, moſt evidently, go againſt what we have, in time paſt, both believed and practiſed. For they have very generally, or very many of them, if not all of them, confeſſed, or affirmed, however their practice may have been, that immerſion was the mode practiſed by the apoſtles and primitive church. This I purpoſe to prove to you in its proper place.

What I have more to add, before I proceed to the main buſineſs, is, to ſtate a few plain truths.

1. Baptiſm is a poſitive inſtitution, about which we can know nothing, as to its being a Chriſtian ordinance, but from what Chriſt, and thoſe inſpired by his Spirit, have taught us.

2. All which we are required to believe and practiſe, with reſpect to the Chriſtian ordinance of baptiſm, is declared to us by Jeſus Chriſt and his forerunner and apoſtles.

3. When Jeſus Chriſt firſt inſtituted the ordinance of baptiſm, he, no doubt, delivered his mind ſo clearly and fully upon the ſubject, that his immediate diſciples and apoſtles underſtood and practiſed as he would have them.

4. Every thing which hath, by the precepts and commandments of men, been added ſince, is diſtinct from the ordinance, and makes no part of it.

5. No man, or body of men, have any more authority to add to this ordinance, or to diminiſh from it, than they have to inſtitute a new one and call it Chriſt's.

6. Whenever, and wherever, this ordinance is ſo changed, as to loſe the intent of the Inſtitutor, then and there the ordinance is loſt, and becomes no Chriſtian ordinance at all.

Having laid theſe preparatory obſervations, remarks and plain truths before you, we proceed to conſider the ſubject now on hand, which is—

Chriſt's command to baptize, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, thoſe who ſhall be diſcipled of all nations.

What is propoſed for the preſent diſcourſe is—

1. To define a few words which appertain to the ordinance of baptiſm. Then—

2. To collect the ſcripture account of baptiſm, together with ſome other texts, which may throw light upon the ſubject. Afterwards, in ſome following diſcourſes, we may—

3. Produce evidence, that my definition of baptiſm is accurate and juſt. Then ſhow—

4. How the apoſtles and primitive church underſtood this matter, and how they practiſed. When this is done, it will be eaſily ſeen—

5. What is the outward and viſible part of Chriſtian baptiſm. Then—

Laſtly. The purport, end and deſign of the baptiſmal inſtitution may call for our attention.

Agreeably to what is propoſed, we are—

1. To define a few words which appertain to the ordinance of baptiſm. Theſe are—

1. *Baptiſterion*, Greek; *baptiſterium* and *lavacrum*, Latin; a font, a bath, a waſhing place, a veſſel to waſh the body in; Engliſh.

2. *Baptiſma* and *baptiſmos*, Greek; *Baptiſma* and *Lotio*, alſo, *ablutia ſaura*, Latin; baptiſm, waſhing, ſacred, ceremonial waſhing; Engliſh.

3. *Baptiſtēs*, Greek; *baptiſta*, Latin; one who dips, a baptiſt; Engliſh.

4. *Baptizō*, Greek; *baptizo, mergo, lavo*, Latin; to baptize, to dip all over, to waſh; Engliſh.

5. *Lauō*, Greek; *lavo*, Latin; to waſh, to rinſe, to bathe; Engliſh.

2. We are to collect the ſcripture account of baptiſm, together with ſome other texts which may throw light upon the ſubject.

We will begin with thoſe paſſages which ſpeak of the baptiſm of John.

1. *Matth.* iii. 5, 6, 7. Then went out to him Jeruſalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him IN Jordan, confeſſing their ſins. But when he ſaw many of the Phariſees and Sadducees come to his baptiſm, he ſaid unto them, O generation of vipers, &c.

2. Verſe 11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, &c.

3. Verſes 13, 14, 15, 16. Then cometh Jeſus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him: but John forbade him, ſaying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and, comeſt thou to me? And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Suffer it to be ſo now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs: then he ſuffered him. And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the water.

4. *Matth.* xxi. 25, 26, 27. The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we should say, From heaven, he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But, if we shall say of men, we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell, &c.

5. *Mark* i. 4, 5. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him IN the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6. Verses 8, 9, 10. I indeed have baptized you with water—And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John IN Jordan, and straightway coming up out of the water, &c.

7. *Mark* xi. 30. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

8. *Luke* iii. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

9. Verses 7, 8. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers ———bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

10. Verse 12. Then came also publicans to be baptized.

11. Verse 16. I indeed baptize you with water.

12. Verse 21. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also, being baptized, &c.

13. *Luke* vii. 29, 30. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

14. *Luke* xx. 4. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

15. *John* i. 25, 26. Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water.

16. Verse 28. Beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

17. Verse 31. That he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

18. Verſe 33. He that ſent me to baptize with water.

19. *John* iii. 23. And John alſo was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, becauſe there was much water there; and they came and were baptized.

20. *John* iv. 1. The Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and baptized more diſciples than John.

21. *John* x. 40. Beyond Jordan, into the place where John at firſt baptized.

22. *Acts* i. 5. John truly baptized with water.

23. Verſe 22. Beginning from the baptiſm of John.

24. *Acts* x. 37. After the baptiſm which John preached.

25. *Acts* xi. 16. John indeed baptized with water.

26. *Acts* xiii. 24. When John had firſt preached, before his coming, the baptiſm of repentance to all the people.

27. *Acts* xviii. 25. He (Apollos) ſpake and taught, diligently, the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptiſm of John.

28. *Acts* xix. 3, 4. Unto what then were ye baptized? And they ſaid, Unto John's baptiſm. Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, that they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt Jeſus.

We will next turn our attention to thoſe texts which mention Chriſt's baptiſm.

1. *Matth.* xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.

2. *Mark* xvi. 15, 16. And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved.

3. *John* iii. 5. Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, &c.

4. Verſe 22. After theſe things came Jeſus and his diſciples into the land of Judea, and there tarried with them and baptized.

5. Verſe 26. Behold the ſame baptizeth, and all men come to him.

6. *John* iv. 1, 2. When therefore the Lord knew how the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and baptized more diſciples than John, (though Jeſus himſelf baptized not, but his diſciples.)

7. *Acts* iii. 38. Then Peter ſaid unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jeſus

Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the Holy Ghoſt.

8. *Acts* ii. 41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.

9. *Acts* viii. 12, 13. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jeſus Chriſt, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himſelf believed alſo, and when he was baptized, &c.

10. *Acts* viii. 16. Only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus.

11. Verſes 36, 37, 38, 39. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch ſaid, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt. And he ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to ſtand ſtill. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, &c.

12. *Acts* ix. 18. And he (Saul) aroſe, and was baptized.

13. *Acts* x. 47, 48. Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

14. *Acts* xvi. 15. And when ſhe (Lydia) was baptized, and her houſehold.

15. Verſe 33. And was baptized, he (the jailor) and all his, ſtraightway.

16. *Acts* xviii. 8. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized.

17. *Acts* xix. 5. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus.

18. *Acts* xxii. 19. And now, why tarrieſt thou? Ariſe and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins, calling on the name of the Lord.

19. *Rom.* vi. 3, 4. Know ye not, that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt Jeſus, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life.

20. 1 *Cor.* i. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: Besides, I know not whether I baptized any other; for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

21. 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. But ye are washed.

22. 1 *Cor.* 12, 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.*

23. 1 *Cor.* xv. 29. Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead?

24. *Gal.* iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

25. *Eph.* iv. 5. One baptism.

26. *Eph.* v. 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

27. *Col.* ii. 12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him.

28. *Titus* iii. 5. According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

29. *Heb.* vi. 2. The doctrine of baptisms †

30. *Heb.* x. 22. Our bodies washed with pure water.

31. 1 *Peter* iii. 21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)

These, I believe, are all the texts in the New Testament which have a plain and obvious reference to either the baptism of John or of Christ. They afford us the sum of all the knowledge which we can have of either the mode or subjects of Christian baptism. What these passages say, we may believe: what they do not countenance, we may not believe. I will now set before you those passages where washing is mentioned, and the Greek words which are used.

1. *Matth.* vi. 17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and (*nipsai*) wash thy face.

* This intends, as some suppose, the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

† It is not certain that this hath any reference to Christian baptism. If it have, it must refer not to that only. See DODDRIGE in loc.

2. *Matth.* xv. 2. Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they (*niptontai*) wash not their hands when they eat bread.

3. *Matth.* xxvii. 24. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and (*apenipsato*) washed his hands.

4. *Mark* vii. 2. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say with (*aniptois*) unwashen hands.

5. Verse 3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they (*nipsōntai*) wash their hands oft, they eat not, &c.

6. Verse 4. When they come from the market, except they (*baptisōntai*) wash, they eat not; and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the (*baptismous*) washings of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

7. Verse 5. But eat bread with (*aniptois*) unwashen hands.

8. Verse 8. For, laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the (*baptismous*) washing of pots and cups.

9. *Luke* v. 2. And they (*apeplunan*) were washing their nets.

10. *Luke* vii. 38. And stood at his feet, behind him, weeping, and began (*brechein*) to wash his feet.

11. Verse 44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she (*ebrexe*) hath washed my feet with tears.

12. *Luke* xi. 38. And when the Pharisees saw it, that he had not first (*ebaptisthē*) washed before dinner.

13. *John* ix. 7. And said unto him, Go, and (*nipsai*) wash in the pool of Siloam;—he went his way therefore and (*enipsato*) washed.

14. Verse 15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight: he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I (*enipsamēn*) washed and do see.

15. *John* xiii. 5. After that he poured water into a bason, and began (*niptein*) to wash the disciples' feet.

16. Verse 6. And Peter said unto him, Lord, dost thou (*niptеis*) wash my feet?

17. Verse 8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never (*nipsēs*) wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I (*nipsō*) wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

18. Verse 10. Jesus saith to him, He that is (*oleloumenos*) washed, needeth not save (*nipsasthai*) to wash his feet, &c.

19. Verse 14. If I then, your Lord and Master (*enipsa*) have washed your feet, ye also ought (*niptein*) to wash one another's feet.

20. *Acts* ix. 37. And it came to pass in those days that she was sick and died, whom when they had (*lousantes*) washed.

21. *Acts* xvi. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and (*elousen*) washed their stripes.

22. *Acts* xxii. 16. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and (*apolousai*) wash away thy sins.

23. 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. But such were some of you, but ye (*apelousasthē*) are washed.

24. *Eph.* v. 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with (*loutrō*) the washing of water by the word.

25. 1 *Tim.* v. 10. If she (*enipsen*) have washed the saints' feet.

26. *Titus* iii. 5. By the (*loutrou*) washing of regeneration.

27. *Heb.* ix. 10. Which stood only in meats and drinks, and (*diaphorois baptismois*) divers washings.

28. *Heb.* x. 22. Having our bodies (*leloumenoi*) washed with pure water.

29. 2 *Peter* ii. 22. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb—and the sow that (*lousamenē*) was washed, &c.

30. *Rev.* i. 5. Unto him that loved us and (*lousanti*) washed us from our sins in his own blood.

31. *Rev.* vii. 14. These are they who came out of great tribulation, and (*eplunan*) have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.*

Those passages which make mention of SPRINKLING, with the Greek words used, now call for your attention.

1. Heb. ix. 13. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer (*rantizousa*) sprinkling the unclean, &c.

* *Plunō* properly signifies to wash clothes; as *louō*, the body; and *niptō*, the face and hands.

2. Verſe 19. He (Moſes) took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and ſcarlet wool, and hyſſop, and (*errantiſe*) ſprinkled both the book and all the people.

3. *Heb.* x. 22. Having our hearts (*errantiſmenoi*) ſprinkled from an evil conſcience.

4. *Heb.* xi. 28. Through faith he kept the paſſover and the (*proſchuſin*) ſprinkling of blood.

5. *Heb.* xii. 24. And to the blood of (*rantiſmou*) ſprinkling.

6. 1 *Peter* i. 2. And to the (*rantiſmon*) ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt.

Laſtly. You will now give attention for a moment to thoſe paſſages of ſcripture where the word DIP is mentioned.

1. *Luke* xvi. 24. That he may (*bapsē*) dip his finger in water.

2. *Matth.* xxvi. 23. And he anſwered and ſaid, He that (*embapſas*) dippeth his hand with me in the diſh.

3. *Mark* xiv. 20. And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, It is one of the twelve that (*embaptomenos*) dippeth with me in the diſh.

4. *John* xiii. 26. And he anſwered, He it is to whom I ſhall give a ſop when I have (*bapſas*) dipped it; and when he had (*embapſas*) dipped the ſop, &c.

5. *Rev.* xix. 13. And he was clothed with a veſture (*bebammenon*) dipped in blood.

A few remarks on what we have paſſed over will cloſe the preſent diſcourſe.

1. We ſee that all the words which appertain to the ordinance of baptiſm, ſignify the ſame which they would provided immerſion were the ſcripture mode.

2. We ſee that the ſubject of baptiſm is very repeatedly mentioned in the New Teſtament. It is brought to view expreſsly in about threeſcore paſſages.

3. Whenever baptiſm is mentioned, and neither the word *bapizō* nor *baptiſmos* is uſed, the word ſubſtituted plainly intimates that bathing, or waſhing the body all over, is the mode; for this is the ſignification of *louō*, which is the word, and the only word, which the ſcriptures employ in the room of *baptizō*.

4. Whenever *baptizō* or *baptiſmos* is tranſlated waſhing, a ceremonial and not a common waſhing is manifeſtly intended.

5. We find that in all the places where ſprinkling is mentioned, the original words, *rhantizō* and *proſchuſini*, are very different from *baptizō* and *baptiſmos*.

6. You will pleaſe to obſerve, that wherever we find, through the New-Teſtament, the word, to dip, it is from the ſame theme whence *baptizō* comes.

7. We ſee that every thing looks as though *immerſion* might be the *mode;* and, as for *ſprinkling*, there is, to ſay the leaſt, nothing which *looks* like it.

SERMON II.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19, 20.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

THE buſineſs which we are now upon depends very much upon the definitions of certain words, and principally upon the definition of the word *baptize*, and upon the certain evidence of ſuch definition or definitions being accurate and juſt. For we can no otherwiſe underſtand what God the Lord ſaith unto us, than by knowing the import of the words by which he is pleaſed to communicate his will. The great Teacher who came from God, hath doubtleſs communicated his mind ſo explicitly that the humble in heart may know the common matters which relate to faith and practice. If we devoutly ſearch the ſcriptures, and ſeek wiſdom as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for hid treaſures, God will make us to underſtand knowledge, and to ſerve him with acceptable practice. The Spirit of the Lord hath moſt certainly choſen acceptable words, words of definite meaning. We are to ſearch out their ſignification, and to be obedient. I cannot judge of their ſignification for you, nor can I anſwer for the judgment which you ſhall make up, nor can you for me.

I am by my office obliged to exhibit, ſo far as I can, all thoſe divine truths which relate to faith and practice. I am obliged to believe and practiſe according to the beſt light which I can gather, or have in any way afforded me. You are under ſimilar obligations.

Whilſt we proceed, I wiſh you to believe fully two things; one is, that truth, if believed and practiſed, will not, on the whole, harm you. The other is, that the moſt ſure way to acquire truth is, to be of a humble and obedient mind, ready to receive the truth. For God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

In the preceding diſcourſe, we attended to the definition of certain words which appertain to the ordinance of baptiſm; and then collected the ſcripture account of baptiſm, together with ſome other texts which are ſuppoſed to throw light upon the ſubject under conſideration. In this diſcourſe we are—

3. To produce the more direct evidence that my definitions of baptiſm and to baptize are accurate and juſt.

The definition which I gave of baptiſm was, a *waſhing*, a *ſacred*, a *ceremonial* waſhing. I will now add to this definition, that it is immerſion, or dipping one all over in water.

The definition which I gave of the word *baptizō* is, to dip all over, to waſh. I will alſo add, that the word ſignifies, to waſh the body, or any thing, all over. What I mean is, that theſe are the ſignification of the words *baptiſma* and *baptizō*, which are rendered baptiſm, and, to baptize.

I am now to produce evidence, that this is a juſt and accurate definition of the words.

You will obſerve, that this is quite different from the *ſubjects* of baptiſm; that is another ſubject, which muſt be attended to in its place.

The evidence which I have to offer, in order to fix preciſely the juſt ſenſe and meaning of the words *baptiſm* and to *baptize*, is contained in the following facts. The

1ſt. Compriſes what the Greek Lexicon, Concordance, and two Engliſh Dictionaries, teſtify of the words.

Schrevelius's Lexicon teſtifies, the import of *baptiſm* is *lotio*, waſhing. Alſo that to *baptize* ſignifies to *waſh*, to put under water, or under any other liquid thing; to ſink, dip in, duck or plunge over head, to immerſe.

Butterworth's Concordance ſays, baptiſm is an ordinance of the New Teſtament, inſtituted by Jeſus Chriſt, whereby a profeſſed believer in Chriſt is, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, immerſed in and covered with water, and then raiſed up out of it, as a ſign of his fellowſhip with Chriſt in his death, burial and reſurrection, and a ſign of his own death to ſin, and reſurrection to newneſs of life here, and to life eternal hereafter. The ſame Concordance defines the word to baptize, thus—to dip, immerſe, or plunge.

Entick's Dictionary ſays, that—*Baptiſm* is a ſacrament that admits into the church.—*Baptizer*, one who chriſtens,

or dips.—*Baptiſtery*, the place of baptizing at, a font.—*Baptize*, to chriſten, plunge, overwhelm.—*Baptized*, admitted to baptiſm, dipt, &c.

Bailey's Dictionary, ſpeaking of baptiſm, or rather the place in which perſons were baptized, ſays, *Baptiſtery* is either the place or veſſel in which perſons are baptized. In ancient times, this being performed by immerſion, the perſons ſo initiated went into a river and were plunged; but in the time of Conſtantine the Great, chapels or places on purpoſe to baptize in, were built in great cities, which was performed in the eaſtern and warmer countries by dipping the perſons; but in proceſs of time, in the weſtern and colder countries, ſprinkling was ſubſtituted in place of dipping; which was the origin of our fonts in churches.

2. I will repeat ſome of the attendant or circumſtantial facts, which have relation to the ordinance of baptiſm, that you may look at them, and judge for yourſelves, whether the preceding definitions appear juſt.

John baptized IN the river Jordan.

He was baptizing in Enon, becauſe there was much water there.

The name of the place, where baptiſm was adminiſtered, is *baptiſterion*, or *baptiſtery*, which ſignifies a place in which to waſh the body all over.

Baptiſm ſignifies to dip, plunge, immerſe, or waſh the body all over in water.

Baptizer ſignifies one who dips, plunges, or waſhes the body all over in water.

To baptize ſignifies to plunge under water, to dip, or to waſh the body all over.

To be baptized is to be plunged, immerſed, or waſhed all over in water.

Does this whole matter, taking ſo many of the words, and ſome circumſtances, and finding them all ſo well agreeing together, help you, in any degree, to the definition of the word *baptize?* Suppoſing theſe things be facts, and you had never had any prejudice for, or againſt, the word baptize, would you be able to gather the meaning of it from what hath been ſaid?

There is an objection ſtarting in the minds of ſome of you, which ſhould be now obviated, leſt it prejudice your minds from the truth.

The objection is, Do not the words signify some other things, as well as those which have been mentioned?

Ans. I have thought they did: but I have searched in several dictionaries, and read many authors upon the words, yet have not found one dictionary which has given a definition of the words different from what I have given; nor one author who has been able to show, that the true meaning of the words is any otherwise than what I have mentioned. Besides, the very course of argumentation which Dr. LATHROP, Mr. CLEAVELAND and others have taken, by which to prove that *baptizō* hath some other signification than to dip, immerse, to bury or overwhelm, is an implicit confession that they were not able to prove any such thing. It is also a strong presumptive argument, that no different signification can be found.

Their argument is this: *Baptō* signifies, in one instance, in the Old Testament, to wet with the dew of heaven. *Baptizō* is the offspring of *baptō*, and consequently may be taken in the same sense. This argument is of the same weight with the following: My father believes in sprinkling, as being baptism; I am his offspring, and consequently I believe the same; when the fact is, I am largely convinced that it is no such thing. Would gentlemen employ such an argument, did not their cause labour? Such an argument, when it stands, as it does, at the front of all their supposed evidence, is an implicit confession that they cannot prove what they wish to.*

This matter will have farther attention in another place.

* Since writing the above, I have met with *Cole's Latin Dictionary*, which gives one English of *baptizo*, to *sprinkle*. It hath, indeed, been matter of no little surprise, that all modern dictionary compilers have not given one definition of the word baptize, to sprinkle; for it, indeed, is one signification, which the practice of many Christians, for two or three hundred years past, has given to the word.

Had all lexicons, and all dictionaries, for the two last centuries, borne united testimony, that one sense of the word *baptizō* was to sprinkle, it would not have been half so unaccountable as it now is that they have so generally retained the ancient and primitive significations, and refused to adopt the modern one, which prejudice, convenience and modern practice have given to it. Indeed, could a thousand modern lexicons and dictionaries be found, which should say, to *sprinkle* is one sense in which *baptizō* is used, it would all come to nothing, unless they should testify that this is one of its ancient and primitive significations: and even then,

3. The words *baptiſmos* and *baptizō* have two, and only two, tranſlations in the New-Teſtament. Theſe two are, *baptiſm* and *waſhing*. They are very generally rendered, *baptiſm*, or to *baptize*. This is their uſual tranſlation. But ſeveral times in *Mark*, *Luke*, and in the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, they are rendered waſhing. As the waſhing of pots, and cups, and brazen veſſels and tables, or ſeats on which they reclined, when they ate meat; and *diaphorois baptiſmois* in Hebrew is rendered *divers waſhings*.

In the law given by Moſes, the people were, on many occaſions, to bathe their bodies, and waſh their clothes in water; and alſo to put their pots and cups and brazen veſſels into water, that they might be cleanſed from ceremonial uncleanneſs. To theſe legal ceremonies the Phariſees had added traditional ones, which were, no doubt, obſerved in the ſame manner as thoſe appointed by the Lord. If ſo, then the waſhing of pots, &c. in *Mark*, was putting them into water, as the command was to do, *Levit.* xi. 32. The divers waſhings in *Heb.* ix. 10. were ceremonial waſhings, or bathings, in which the body was waſhed, or dipped. *Numb.* xix. 19. This being the caſe, does not this matter go to confirm, or determine, what is the definition of baptiſm?

4. We will now mention a few noted witneſſes, who have given their teſtimony as to the meaning of the word *baptizō*.

Calvin, a very warm oppoſer of the Baptiſts, ſhall, as a witneſs in this cauſe, ſpeak firſt. His teſtimony is, "Howbeit, the very word of baptizing ſignifieth to dip."

Zanchius, as brought forward by the Rev. Mr. Butterworth, ſhall be my next witneſs. He ſays, *baptizō* is to immerſe, plunge under, to overwhelm in water.

I could quote, or bring forward, a multitude of witneſſes, and all from our own order, the Pedobaptiſts, to prove the ſame point. But in the mouth of two or three witneſſes, if they be good ones, every word ſhall be eſtabliſhed. We will therefore produce but one more; that ſhall be good

it would come to no more than this, that the word is leſs determinate than it is now ſuppoſed to be. Could they do this, it would be ſtill nothing unleſs they prove the ſcriptures uſe it in this ſenſe, which they cannot do. But if they could, it would not be fully to their point, unleſs they can ſhow that it is thus uſed in application to the ordinance.

Dr. Owen. "For the original and natural ſignification of it (*baptizō*) ſignifies to dip, to plunge."*

5. I will mention to you a Greek word, which Paul repeatedly uſes, as ſignifying the ſame thing as *baptizō*, and where he means the ſame thing, namely, baptiſm.

In 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. Paul, ſpeaking to the Corinthians of divers kinds of vile ſinners, ſays, "And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed," &c.

Eph. v. 26. That he might ſanctify and cleanſe it (the church) with the *waſhing* of water, by the word.

Heb. x. 22. Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, and our *bodies waſhed* with pure water.

The Pedobaptiſts acknowledge that *waſhing*, in theſe texts, means *baptiſm*, and I know not that any of them deny it. Baptiſm and waſhing appear to be uſed as ſynonymous words, or as words ſignifying the ſame thing. If this be the caſe, then the two words, *baptizō* and *louō*, which are tranſlated, one to baptize, and the other to waſh, mean the ſame thing, and are thus intended by the Apoſtle. Then, provided we can determine what *louō* means, we can alſo determine what is the ſignification of *baptizō*. This word, *louō*, ſignifies to waſh, and to bathe the body in water; for thus it is generally if not univerſally uſed, and from it is *loutron*, a bath, or place to waſh the body in. Beſides, the word *louō* is never uſed in the New-Teſtament, nor any where elſe, to my knowledge, to ſignify either ſprinkling or common waſhing. Its appropriate ſenſe appears to be, bathing, or waſhing, any thing all over; as you may ſee, *Acts* ix. 37. and xvi. 33; 2 *Peter* ii. 22; which are the only places where I recollect the word *louō* is uſed, ſave where the ordinance of baptiſm appears to be referred to. This being the caſe, the matter appears juſt as it would, provided the ordinance included the bathing of the body in water. This is letting ſcripture interpret itſelf; and the interpretation which it gives is, baptiſm is bathing, or waſhing the body in water. This, therefore, may help you a little towards determining in your minds what is the ſignification of *baptizō*. For *louō* is repeatedly uſed in ſcripture, as importing the ſame mode of waſhing which is commanded in the ordinance of baptiſm.

* Ancient Dialogue.

6. Paul's deſcription of the mode of baptizing, or of what is done to thoſe who are baptized, may afford you farther light upon the ſubject.

Paul brings this matter up to the Roman and Coloſſian Chriſtians, as a matter well known to them. To the former he ſays, *Rom.* vi. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in newneſs of life. To the other he ſays, *Col.* ii. 12. Buried with him in baptiſm, wherein alſo ye are riſen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raiſed him from the dead.

Upon theſe texts, Dr. Doddridge has the following note. "It ſeems the part of candour to confeſs, that here is an alluſion to baptiſm by immerſion, as was moſt uſual in theſe early times." Here the good doctor ſays, "as was *moſt uſual*:" this I ſhall, by and by, explain to you.

In the mean time, you will pleaſe to pay due attention to what was done to thoſe who were baptized, and which appears to be familiar to the Roman and Coloſſian Chriſtians. The Apoſtle makes no remarks, and explains nothing to them, but ſpeaks to them as though they would and did well underſtand what he meant, when he ſaid, "We are buried with him by baptiſm into death;" and, "Buried with him in baptiſm." It is plain fact, that Paul thus ſpeaks, and it alſo appears, very plainly, that he had no apprehenſion but that he ſhould be underſtood.

Biſhop Hoadly's declaration appears to be much in point: 'If baptiſm,' ſays he, 'had been THEN,' *i. e.* in the apoſtles' days, 'performed as it is NOW among us, we ſhould never have ſo much as heard of this form of expreſſion, of dying and riſing again in this rite.'*

Theſe things I have thought it my duty to lay before you, that I might aſſiſt you, by a number of plain facts, to form a judgment, each one for himſelf, what the meaning of baptiſm is, and what the word to *baptize* ſignifies.

I have ſtill more light upon this ſubject, and ſhall, in the next diſcourſe, lay it within your view. It will perhaps be, to ſome of you, more convincing than any thing which I have as yet exhibited. But previouſly I will make one obſervation, and it is this: all the evidence which we

* Ten Letters.

have been exhibiting, we have on one ſide of the queſtion; and, if I miſtake not, none on the other to counteract it: for, if my memory and judgment be correct, the wiſeſt and beſt of men, of our own denomination, have aſſerted, that theſe things are ſo. I do not ſay that all good men have; but the moſt learned have, and ſome who have appeared very pious.

But you will ſay, Why have they not practiſed differently, if they have thus believed? I am not anſwerable for their practice; but, if the Lord will, I ſhall, ere long, give you the reaſons which they aſſign.

I ſhall only add, for the preſent, two or three conſequences, and then leave the ſubject for your conſideration.

1. The Baptiſts have, againſt our practice, and for theirs, that kind of evidence which is, perhaps, in all caſes but the preſent, conſidered the moſt unequivocal and certain. This evidence is given in by a cloud of witneſſes, who, whilſt they are bearing their teſtimony, condemn themſelves every ſentence they utter. If theſe men, who are confeſſed by both ſides to be both pious and learned, may be believed, the cauſe will moſt certainly be determined againſt us; for there was never a clearer caſe. They unitedly teſtify that the ſcripture mode of baptiſm is immerſion, but omit the practice. In this they condemn themſelves.

2. The ſcripture ſenſe, and, for aught appears, the only ſenſe, of baptiſm, is, dipping, immerſion, burying in water, being overwhelmed, and the like.

3. We are brought to this dilemma, either to commence Baptiſts, as to the mode, or do as our fathers have done, confeſs the truth in theory, and neglect it in practice.

SERMON III.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19, 20.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

MEN, brethren, and fathers, we are ſtill upon a very important ſubject—a ſubject which highly concerns us as Chriſtians—a ſubject in which our feelings, our reputation, and our peace too, may not be a little concerned. Many things, not to ſay every thing, call upon us not to go too faſt; and, at the ſame time, obedience to our common Lord forbids all backwardneſs, in purſuing where his truth and Spirit lead us.

All which I requeſt of you is, with candour hear, with readineſs obey, what truth ſhall dictate.

Should we, after long and ſerious deliberation, be obliged to believe and practiſe differently from what we have heretofore done, we ſhall be much expoſed to two things: one is, to be reviled; the other, to revile again. What we ſhall need is, patience to bear the one, and grace that we may avoid the other.

Perhaps human nature is more inclined to nothing than to an overbearing ſpirit. It is perfectly conſonant with human nature to make ourſelves, and not the ſcriptures, the ſtandard of both faith and practice. The natural conſequence of this is cenſure againſt all who dare to think, or act, as we do not. To guard you againſt unreaſonable and common prejudice, I will, for your conſideration, ſuggeſt a thought, which we may do well to remember; and it is this: many, who ſhall believe and practiſe as we have long done, may be as honeſt and faithful as we then were. This being true, the following conſequence is plain, that the line of conduct which the Baptiſts ought to have practiſed, in months and years paſt, towards us, the ſame, if we be Baptiſts, will it become us to purſue with relation to others. It

requires not much foresight to discover, that we shall need much of that wisdom which is profitable to direct.

Whilst it may be indispensable with us to use every prudent mean to diffuse that light which God may graciously afford us, it will be our wisdom to do every thing in such a manner as not to heighten, but, if possible, to lower, the prejudices of good people.

Whilst you, my dear friends and people, know that light chaseth away the darkness, and that truth will ultimately prevail against every error; I solicit your candour and prayerful attention, that error may not be retained, or prevail against any of us, to our wounding.

Our attention hath already been called to the definition of a number of words, which relate to the ordinance of baptism, to the scripture account of baptism, together with some other texts, which were supposed to throw light upon the subject, and also to some evidence in support of the given definitions. As the great question turns upon what is commanded, and as that cannot be otherwise known than by making sure the import of the words used, we shall therefore search for additional light and certainty, by inquiring—

4. How the apostles and primitive Christians understood this matter, and how they practised.

If this can be made plain, then, perhaps, your mind will be satisfied, and your judgments made up.

I proceed to lay the evidence before you.

There appears no necessity of spending time to produce evidence that the apostles understood the matter to be as I have proved to you that it was: for they, no doubt, understood the words which Christ spake, and the commands which he gave; besides, if the apostles and primitive church practised thus, it is evident that they thus understood it; for doubtless they, especially the apostles, were honest men, and practised as they understood Jesus Christ to have directed them.

I will here make two observations to you; and I wish you to remember them.

The first is, no person should, especially in important matters, make up his judgment, that any particular subject is true, till he has evidence of its truth.

The other is, the best proof which the nature of any case admits of, may and ought to be considered as evidence, and

ſo received by us, as to thoſe things we are called to believe and practiſe.

There are different degrees of evidence: the higheſt kind produces knowledge. When the evidence is ſmall, it produces a weak and dubious belief. But where it is ſuch that, on ſuppoſition the thing be true, the evidence could not be greater than it is, there we are obliged to yield our aſſent, and we do violence to our reaſon if we will not believe.

The evidence, which we have with reſpect to the practice of the apoſtles in the matter of baptizing, differs in degree, and, in ſome meaſure, in kind, from the evidence which we have reſpecting the practice of the church in later ages as to the ſame matter. But if we have, with reſpect to the practice of both, the beſt evidence which the different caſes admit of, we are under obligation to believe the evidence good, and the facts true which are ſupported by it.

We have much the ſame kind of evidence with reſpect to the practice of the apoſtles, which we have as to the practice of the church for many ages after them. Mr. Baxter, biſhop Hoadly, and others, teſtify, that the apoſtolic practice was, immerſion. We have, moreover, as to their practice, a much higher kind of evidence. In ſupport of their practice, I ſhall produce the beſt kind of evidence, and afterwards, whilſt ſpeaking of the practice of the church in ſucceeding ages, may occaſionally bring forward ſome of the other kind of evidence, in ſupport of the apoſtles' practice.

As to the practice of the apoſtles, in the adminiſtration of baptiſm, I obſerve, we have in the ſcriptures four diſtinct ſources of evidence. The

1ſt. Is this. When baptiſm is mentioned by the diſciples and apoſtles, and the common word is not uſed, they uniformly employ one particular word, and this word is of very determinate ſignification, and expreſſes the bathing, or waſhing, of the body in water, as *Heb.* x. 22: Having our bodies (*leloumenoi*) *waſhed* with pure water. *Acts* xxii. 16. Ariſe and be baptized, and (*apolouſai*) waſh away thy ſins. 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. But ye are (*apolouſaſthe*) *waſhed*. By the determinate ſignification of this word, their practice appears to be immerſion.

2. The apoſtles were commanded to dip, immerſe, or plunge all over in water, the perſons whom they admitted to this ordinance. This is evident from the determinate

signification of the word to baptize. Says the command, Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, &c. We have before proved what is the signification of this word, and consequently what Christ commanded his disciples, when he sent them to baptize.

I do not now say that the apostles immersed any; but this is what I say, they were commanded thus to do. I leave it for you to determine, whether they did, or whether they did not.

3. I observe to you, that the New-Testament, wherever it speaks of the apostles baptizing any, says they immersed them, or dipt them all over in water. For this is the plain, literal and common, if not the only signification of the word. I still leave it with you to determine whether the apostles did, or did not, practise thus.

Lest some of you may have forgotten what I have before proved to you, and consequently entertain some doubt whether baptism may not sometimes signify the application of water in a different way; we will make two or three observations.

1. The plain, literal and common signification of the word is to immerse, overwhelm, dip, or to plunge all over.

2. There appears to be no evidence that it is ever used so much as once, in any part of the Bible, to signify the application of water in any other sense. Even in those passages where I have in time past supposed that the meaning might be, and probably was, *washing* without immersion, the sense appears to be putting into water or immersion, and not what we commonly understand by the word washing. Of this you may be convinced by considering the treatment to which the Jews were accustomed with respect to those vessels which were ceremonially unclean. They were to baptize them, or put them into water, as you may see, *Levit.* xi. 32. "And upon whatsoever any of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean; whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack; *whatsoever vessel* it be, wherein any work is done, it must be *put into water*, and it shall be unclean until the even; so it shall be cleansed."

3. I will observe to you that it would most visibly be a reflection upon the great Teacher who came from God, to suppose that he should, when appointing a positive insti-

tution, uſe words aſide from their plain and commonly received ſenſe, that too without giving any intimation of his uſing the words in any ſenſe differing from the common, eſpecially when he was ſetting up a new inſtitution, about which his moſt faithful followers could, in all ſucceeding generations, know nothing but from the words uſed in and about the inſtitution. Does not all this appear plain and reaſonable?

Now the Bible in the plain, literal and common-ſenſe of the words which it uſes, ſays, the apoſtles dipt, plunged or immerſed all ſuch as they admitted to baptiſm. You will judge for yourſelves whether the apoſtles practiſed thus, or whether they did not.

4. The practice of the apoſtles is farther illuſtrated and confirmed by what Paul tells the Roman and Coloſſian Chriſtians, with reſpect to what took place when they received the ordinance of baptiſm. He ſays to the former, "We are buried with him by baptiſm into death:" To the other he ſays, "Buried with him *in* baptiſm." Paul ſpeaks of this matter as a thing perfectly underſtood by Chriſtians in his time, and uſed it as an argument to promote their weanedneſs from the world, and growth in ſanctification. But have you not either paſſed over theſe and ſimilar paſſages, without noticing them, or conſidered them rather hard to be underſtood? But how eaſy is it to underſtand them, provided the apoſtles practiſed as the ſcriptures ſay they did! I ſtill leave it with you to determine for yourſelves how the apoſtles practiſed.

This is the beſt evidence which the nature of the ſubject admits. This matter, the apoſtles' practice, was tranſacted many ages ſince. We have the teſtimony of the ſcriptures as to what it was; this is evidence enough: however, we ſhall occaſionally add the teſtimony of men.

We ſhall now attend to the practice of the church, and diſcover, if we can, how it was for ages after the apoſtles. The beſt evidence which this part of my ſubject admits is that of human teſtimony.* I by no means reſt the merit

* Chriſt's promiſe to his apoſtles, to their ſucceſſors, and to the Church may aſſure us that the ordinance of baptiſm, by which his people ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from the world, would ever continue. Therefore could we know what the church hath always practiſed, eſpecially that part of it which hath been moſt ſeparate from the world, then their practice would afford a ſtrong argument in favour of what the inſtitution intended.

of the cauſe on this evidence. At the ſame time, it may weaken the prejudices of ſome, and be a mean of confirming others in the belief of the truth.

It appears ſo plain a caſe that we can hardly refuſe aſſent to it, that as the church hath for a ſeries of ages practiſed, ſo have they believed. When we ſhall ſee what their practice hath been, we ſhall the more eaſily concede that their belief hath been ſimilar.

What is now before us is to produce and to receive evidence relative to the practice of the primitive church. It is the following :—

1. This evidence conſiſts in the united teſtimony of both thoſe who practiſed the adminiſtration of the ordinance by immerſion, and thoſe who uſed ſprinkling, and called it baptizing.

Moſheim, a very noted church hiſtorian, and not very friendly to the Baptiſts, bears direct teſtimony that John, Chriſt's forerunner, and the church in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, practiſed immerſion as the mode of baptizing. The following you may take as a ſample of his evidence. "The exhortations of this reſpectable meſſenger (John) were not without effect, and thoſe who, moved by his ſolemn admonition, had formed the reſolution of correcting their evil diſpoſitions and amending their lives, were initiated into the kingdom of the Redeemer by the ceremony of immerſion, or baptiſm."*

Speaking of the church in the ſecond century, he ſays, "The perſons that were to be baptized, after they had repeated the creed, confeſſed and renounced their ſins, and particularly the devil in his pompous allurements, were immerſed under water, and received into Chriſt's kingdom by a ſolemn invocation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, according to the *expreſs command* of our bleſſed Lord.†

The Doctor ſpeaking of ſome inferior ſects of the ſeventeenth century, and particularly of a ſect called Collegiants, ſays, "Thoſe adult perſons, that deſire to be baptized, receive the ſacrament of baptiſm according to the ancient and primitive manner of celebrating that inſtitution, even by *immerſion.*"‡

Mr. Bailey, in his Etymological Engliſh Dictionary, ſays, "In ancient times, this (baptiſm) being performed by im-

* Century I. chap. iii. ſect. 3. † Cent. II. part ii. chap. v. ſect. 12.
‡ Vol. v. p. 488.

merſion, the perſons ſo initiated went into a river, &c. and were plunged."

John Calvin, in his *Inſtitutions*, Book IV. chap. xv. ſect. 19, ſays, "It is certain that the manner of dipping was uſed of the old church."

Here are three ſubſtantial witneſſes. Theſe might be ſufficient, ſeeing there is not one to be found who will, or dares, give direct and poſitive teſtimony againſt the truth of what theſe affirm. But ſince there are an hoſt who ſtand ready to give in their teſtimony, even againſt their own practice, we will hear what two more of them will teſtify relative to the important cauſe now on trial.

Theſe two ſhall be Dr. Cave and the famous Mr. Baxter.

Dr. Cave, a great ſearcher into antiquity, ſays, "That the party baptized was wholly immerſed, or put under water, which was the *common*, *conſtant*, and *univerſal* cuſtom of thoſe times; whereby they did ſignificantly expreſs the great end and effects of baptiſm, repreſenting Chriſt's death, burial and reſurrection, and, in conformity thereto, our dying unto ſin, the deſtruction of its power, and our reſurrection to a new courſe of life," &c.*

Moſt remarkable is the teſtimony which Mr. Baxter gives to this truth, in the following words: "It is commonly confeſſed by us to the Baptiſts, (as our commentators declare) that in the apoſtles' time, the baptized were dipped over head in water, and this ſignifieth their profeſſion both of believing the burial and reſurrection of Chriſt, and of their own dying unto ſin, and living, or riſing again to newneſs of life, or being buried and riſen again with Chriſt, as the apoſtle expoundeth baptiſm, Col. ii. 12, and Rom. iv. 6. And though (ſaith he) we have thought it lawful to diſuſe the manner of dipping and to uſe leſs water, yet we preſume not to change the uſe and ſignification of it; ſo then he that ſignally profeſſes to die and riſe again in baptiſm with Chriſt, doth *ſignally* profeſs *ſaving faith* and *repentance*; but *this* do all they that are baptized according to the apoſtolic practice."†

As theſe witneſſes teſtify, ſo do all learned and pious men who have critically attended to this ſubject, and afterwards given in any direct and poſitive evidence upon the matter.

* Ten Letters. † Ibid.

2. The evidence as to the practice of the primitive church, conſiſts in the teſtimony of men to this truth, that the church did for thirteen hundred years practiſe immerſion, ſome extreme caſes excepted.

The only evidence which I purpoſe to give in ſupport of this for the preſent, is the teſtimony of the author of *Ten Letters* to Biſhop Hoadly upon the mode and ſubjects of baptiſm, and the confeſſion of Dr. Lathrop that it was even ſo.

The author of the *Letters* aſſerts that this was the practice of the church for thirteen hundred years after the commencement of the Chriſtian era. Dr. Lathrop aſſents that this was the fact; as you may ſee, by reading his four ſermons on baptiſm, where he gives theſe letters a particular attention, and is ſuppoſed to aſſent, where he makes no objection.

3. All the churches in Europe, Aſia and Africa, ever have done, and do now, practiſe immerſion, ſave thoſe who are now, or have been, under the juriſdiction of the Pontiffs of Rome.

The ſame witneſſes who bore their teſtimony to the laſt particular, give in their evidence in ſupport of this, and in the ſame way; the one aſſerting the fact, the other aſſenting that it is even ſo.

4. The very reaſons which have been given and which are ſtill given to juſtify the contrary practice, are a plain confeſſion that immerſion, or burying the ſubjects under water, was the practice of the apoſtles and primitive church in the ordinance of baptiſm, and what Chriſt commanded to be done.

The reaſons which are alleged why ſprinkling may be ſubſtituted for immerſion, are, the want of health, in ſome inſtances where they ſuppoſe baptiſm to be neceſſary; the weakneſs of conſtitution with reſpect to ſome, and the coldneſs of climate with reſpect to many, and as to all in northern climes in the wintry ſeaſon. Here is a ſilent acknowledgment, that it is not the inſtitution, that it is not the permiſſion of Chriſt, but mere accidental and local circumſtances, which make it lawful to lay by the command of Chriſt, and to receive in its ſtead the precepts and commandments of men.

Mr. Bailey ſays, in his Dictionary, that baptiſm was performed in the eaſtern and warmer countries by dipping

the perſons all over; but in proceſs of time, in the weſtern and colder countries, ſprinkling was ſubſtituted in the place of dipping.

Dr. Lathrop in his ſermons implicitly confeſſes the following extracts to be both true and genuine.

Mr. Baxter, in his *Paraphraſe on the New-Teſtament*, obſerves on Matth. iii. 6. "We grant that baptiſm then was by waſhing the whole body; and did not the difference of our cold country, as to that hot one, teach us to remember, 'I will have mercy and not ſacrifice,' it ſhould be ſo here."

The author of the *Letters to Biſhop Hoadly*, in the twenty-third page, writes thus: "Mr. Baxter, we have already ſeen, excuſes the matter by the coldneſs of our climate. Calvin, the celebrated reformer of Geneva, obſerves in his Expoſition of Acts viii. 38, 'We ſee here what was the baptiſmal rite among the ancients, for they plunged the whole body in the water.' Now it is the cuſtom for the miniſter to ſprinkle only the body or head, and he too excuſes this ſprinkling, but how, I cannot well recollect, not having his book at hand."

Biſhop Burnet though he thus deſcribes the primitive baptiſm, "With no other garments but that might ſerve to cover nature, they at firſt laid them down, as a man is laid in the grave, and then they ſaid theſe words, I baptize, or waſh, thee in the name, &c. Then they raiſed them up again, and clean garments were put upon them; from whence came the phraſes of being baptized into Chriſt's death, of being buried with him by baptiſm into death, of our being riſen with Chriſt, and of our putting on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; of putting off the old man, and putting on the new,"—and though he juſtly obſerves that ſacraments are poſitive precepts, which are to be meaſured only by the inſtitution, in which there is not room left for us to carry them any farther;—yet forgetting his own meaſure of the inſtitution, viz. the party baptized was laid down in the water, as a man is laid in the grave, he ſays, "The danger in cold climates may be a very good reaſon for changing the form of baptiſm to ſprinkling."*

I propoſe for the preſent to note but one quotation more, and that ſhall be in the words of Dr. Wall, as quoted in the *Letters*. The Doctor in giving the reaſons why, in

* Burnet's Expoſition of the Thirty-nine articles.

Queen Elizabeth's reign, the custom of dipping was laid aside, observes, "It being allowed to weak children to be baptized by affusion, many found ladies and gentlemen first, and then, by degrees, the common people, would obtain the favour of the priest to have their children pass for weak children, too tender to endure dipping in the water."* Now,

6. It may be easy for you to gather what is the outward and visible part of the ordinance of baptism.

It is to immerse proper subjects in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This is the outward and visible part of baptism, the scriptures being judge; this literal and plain meaning of the command being judge; the practice of the apostles being judge; the practice of the church for more than a thousand years being judge; and even if we appeal to those who refuse to practise thus, they add their testimony, that it is what was commanded. They pretend not to say that any new command hath been given, or that the old one hath ever been changed. What shall we say to these things!!!

I conclude by submitting a question, and a few inferences, for your consideration.

The question is, If immersion be from heaven, and sprinkling from men, by what authority do we continue the practice?

The inferences are—

1. We, who call ourselves Pedobaptists, are as a house divided against itself. To say the least, we appear thus. Our champions will look us in the face, and assure us, that the Baptists have plain scripture for their mode, and yet we have a right to choose on the score of convenience, &c. what mode is pleasing to us. Thus say Calvin, Hoadly, Owen, and others: whilst in their practice they have been, in this instance, like the servant who knew, but did not his lord's will. These good men have confessed rather too much for the credit of their practice, and our comfort while copying it. Many, however, have risen up in defence of our fathers' practice and ours. They invent many ingenious hypotheses to prove it from heaven, but not one affords a solid conclusion which shows it to be so.

2. According to the light which for the present appears, we cannot but conclude that our definitions of baptism and

* Vol. II. p. 30. 1 Ed.

to baptize are ſcriptural, accurate and juſt. If we will do the will of God, we muſt practiſe what he commands.

3. It appears that it is not left with us to chooſe what mode we will practiſe in adminiſtering or in receiving the ordinance of baptiſm; for we find but one mode to it: and we muſt practiſe this, or none. We may ſprinkle a perſon in the name of the Father, &c. and we may waſh the face, or any part of a perſon, in the ſame ſacred name; but it is not poſſible to baptize a perſon in this way; for ſprinkling, or any ſmall, partial waſhing never was, is not now, nor ever will be, what the ſcriptures mean by Chriſtian baptiſm.

4. That a perſon muſt be greatly unacquainted with the plain, literal, ſcripture account of baptiſm, or extremely prejudiced, not to ſay perverſe, to affirm that the Bible ſays nothing about immerſion, or burying in water for baptizing. For it ſpeaks of this mode, and of no other, in the application of water as a goſpel ordinance.

The Baptiſts have for their mode the broad *baſis* of *ſcripture*, antiquity, and the uninterrupted, and ſomewhat univerſal practice of the church.

5. It appears that for well-informed Pedobaptiſts to oppoſe the Baptiſts, as to their mode of baptizing, is very great wickedneſs. For the Baptiſts have the advantage of plain and expreſs ſcripture on their ſide, and the learned, critical and candid Pedobaptiſts know it.

Ignorance is the beſt and only excuſe which we can make for ourſelves for any oppoſition which we have made againſt the ancient and primitive mode which the Baptiſts have practiſed in the adminiſtration of the ordinance. Our contention in this matter hath not been againſt the Baptiſts merely, but it hath been againſt their Lord and ours.

Dr. Lathrop appears generouſly to grant the truth, that immerſion is ſcripture baptiſm, and only contends that ſprinkling be alſo allowed; which every candid mind would readily do, were there one text of ſcripture to ſupport it.

6. No true Chriſtian, if he knew what he did, would ever make light of immerſion, which the Lord commands, and the Baptiſts practiſe, as the mode of baptizing, or, more ſtrictly, as baptiſm itſelf.

SERMON IV.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19, 20.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

WHILST diſcourſing to you upon theſe words, I have, as I ſuppoſe, proved to you what is the outward and viſible part of baptiſm. You have, to appearance, given a ſerious and ſolemn attention, and, I hope, a candid one, to what hath been ſaid.

All which I aſk of you in this matter is, that you in the ſpirit of meekneſs hear the whole, and then judge and practiſe in ſuch a manner as you cannot refuſe to do, without doing violence to your reaſon, and without diſobedience to the command of Heaven.

Some of you may be afraid of diſcord; but whence, I pray you, will diſcord ariſe among brethren? Will a candid, prayerful and ſelf-denying attention to truth cauſe this feared diſcord? Hath truth a tendency to produce diſcord among the faithful followers of the Lamb of God? I know that once, when Chriſt preached the doctrines of the croſs, multitudes of profeſſing diſciples went back, and followed no more with him. I hope it will not be thus with any of you. But, my brethren, however it may be with any of you, one thing is clear—I ought, I muſt declare to you, ſo faſt as I profitably can, all thoſe truths of God which appear neceſſary to build you up in ſound faith and holy practice.

As I have ſaid before, ſo ſay I unto you again, that all which I aſk of you is, to give truth a candid hearing, and yield your aſſent, when facts are plainly proved.

Nothing ſhould, by me, be thought too much to be done, to clear away from your minds the darkneſs of prejudice, together with any erroneous belief and practice which you

may have imbibed, in part, by my means. I shall, therefore, in this discourse, after having attended to the purport, end or design of baptism, answer some objections, which may for the present obstruct the force of truth.

Before we proceed to the particular business of this discourse, you will, if you please, attend for a minute to a few questions and their answers.

1. Is it not a plain case, that it is my duty to deliver to you the whole counsel of God, according to the best light it may please him to afford me?

2. Is it not equally plain, that your duty is to yield, not to me, but to the truths which I deliver, an obedient ear?

3. Should you, from an uncandid and prejudiced mind, refuse to be converted by the truth, will the fault be mine?

4. Should I exhibit full evidence, as to the subject on hand, and exhibit that evidence clearly too, or should it be that I have done this, and yet great difficulties should arise, will you be justified should you lay the blame to me?

5. Should I teach you the truth, and produce all the evidence which you can ask for, and you should, all, like faithful Christians, believe it, where or whence will arise any difficulty among us? Should any of you refuse to believe, will you charge your difficulties to my account?

6. Are not all of you determined that you will hear candidly, and believe upon evidence?

You will please to give a Christian and judicious answer to each of these questions, and let your practice be conformed with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having laid before you the principal part of the facts and evidence, which I intended, as to the visible and outward part of baptism, now—

Lastly. The purport, end and design of the Baptismal Institution may call for some attention.

The purport, end or design of this Christian ordinance, or institution, appears to be—

1. For a dividing line between the kingdom of our Lord, and the kingdoms of this world.

John was Christ's forerunner: he was sent before his face to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord;* and that Christ should be made

* Luke i. 17.

manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore, ſays John, am I come baptizing with water.* John's miſſion comprehended a double purpoſe, to make ready a people, prepared for the Lord, and to manifeſt Him unto Iſrael. The people which he inſtrumentally made ready, and prepared to receive the Lord, he baptized; and it appears from his rejecting many of the Phariſees and Sadducees, that he intentionally baptized none other.† The whole diſcourſe which he had with them, *Matt.* iii. 7 to 12, is good evidence that he admitted none to baptiſm but ſuch as brought forth viſible fruits of repentance. Such perſons he admitted among that people which he was making ready for the Lord. This people were, when prepared, to compoſe that kingdom, or the beginning of that kingdom, which ſhall never be deſtroyed, and which is an everlaſting kingdom, which ſhall ſtand forever; *Daniel* ii. 44. and vii. 27. This kingdom Chriſt calls the kingdom of heaven, and ſays, it is not of this world.

It appears to be this kingdom, which was now at hand, almoſt ready to be ſet up, of which Chriſt ſpeaks to Nicodemus, when he ſays, *John* iii. 5. Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

All this does, for ſubſtance, meet the ſentiment of Baptiſts and Pedobaptiſts on this ſubject. Both ſuppoſe, that none can belong to this kingdom without being born of water, or baptized. Both ſuppoſe that men may profeſſedly, or viſibly, belong to this kingdom, without being born of the Spirit: but, perhaps, neither the Baptiſts, nor Pedobaptiſts, would ſay, that any do, ſtrictly ſpeaking, belong to this kingdom, except they have been born of water and of the Spirit. Our Lord ſaith, Verily, verily, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. If a man cannot enter into this kingdom but in this way, he cannot belong to it in any other.

Both ſides grant, that baptiſm, or to be born of water, is the only way of admittance into this kingdom. They are not ſo well agreed as to what it is to be born of water, whether it be to be ſprinkled, waſhed, or immerſed. Concerning this matter you muſt judge for yourſelves.

This being a given point, that the deſign of baptiſm is, at it ſhould be for a dividing line between that kingdom,

* John i. 31. † Matt. iii. 7.

which the God of heaven was to set up in the latter day, and this world, I would suggest for your consideration—Which draws the line of separation most clearly between this kingdom and all other kingdoms on earth; to enter it by being sprinkled; or by being visibly and actually buried in water, and rising as it were from the dead, to join this kingdom?

I will also suggest one thing more for your consideration: Which hath the most direct and natural tendency to cause Christ's kingdom to appear to be, as it really is, not of this world? To have almost all admitted into it, infancy, and infidelity, and all by sprinkling, or by a little water put upon the face, and the greater part of them living in open wickedness, or manifest unbelief, and unnoticed by the church to which they are supposed to belong; or, to have none admitted but professed believers, and these admitted in a way which significantly says, that they turn their backs upon the world; yea, that they are dead to the world, and are risen with Christ. I only suggest this for your consideration. I hope to attend to it in its place, but not to-day.

2. The purport, end or design of baptism appears to be for a manifestation, that the subjects of it have forsaken all, yea, their own lives, for Christ's sake and the gospel.

How can this be more visibly manifested, than by being buried with him in baptism? How can a man more visibly forsake all, than he does when buried? How can any one more manifestly forsake his own life for another, than by voluntarily submitting himself into the hands of another to be buried alive?

Is not this agreeable to what Christ saith, Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple?

3. It appears to be for a representation of our being washed from our sins in the blood of the Lamb.

John, the revelator, saith, speaking of Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." This is a figurative expression, showing at once the procuring cause, the blood of Christ, and the gracious effect, our souls purged from dead works to serve the Living God. Can any natural sign represent this more fully, than does baptism, in which our bodies are washed with pure water?

4. The purport, end or design of this Christian ordinance appears to be for the promotion of piety in individuals, and purity in the church.

What can have a stronger tendency to move the heart of a Christian to piety and weanedness from the world, than has the institution of baptism? Seeing at every remembrance of it, he is put in mind, how Christ died *for sin*, and how every one who hath believed and been baptized, has by the ordinance figurally died *to sin*, been buried from the world, and raised again to newness of life. Hath not this ordinance also an equally strong tendency to preserve the purity of the church, should it be administered as we have proved it ought to be, by immersion only? And should another thing be found to be true, that visible believers only should be admitted to it, what a world of unbelievers would this shut out of the church! How differently would the professed church of Jesus Christ appear from what it now does!

If my information be correct, every natural born subject of the crown of England is, according to the laws of their national church, to be baptized, and immediately considered as a member of the church. This is, indeed, consistent, if all the parents have, in any past period, been proselyted to the Christian religion, and if baptism have come into the place of circumcision, and to be administered to children and infants, as that was.

Not only so, but probably nine-tenths of the inhabitants of New-England, if not of our nation, belong to the church, according to the professed belief of the Pedobaptists. Upon the same principle I presume that more than three-fourths of all the adults in this and the neighbouring towns belong to the church, and have, if the principle be according to the gospel, a right to require admittance to the Lord's Supper, and baptism for their children. Then, upon the same principle, would their children be members of the church, and entitled to all the privileges of God's house, as they come to years, and nothing short of gross immorality could justify their exclusion. Does this look as though Christ's kingdom were not of this world?

5. The purport, end or design of baptism appears to be well described by Dr. Goodwin, in the following words: "The eminent thing signified and represented in baptism is

not singly the blood of Christ, as it *washes* us from our sins, but there is a further representation therein of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, in the baptized: and this is not in a bare conformity to Christ, but is a representation of a communion with Christ in his death and resurrection; therefore it is said, We are buried with him in baptism, and wherein we are risen with him, &c. And moreover, here it is that the answer of a good conscience, which is made the inward effect of this ordinance, 1 *Peter* iii. 21, is there also attributed to Christ's resurrection, as the thing signified and represented in baptism; and as the cause of that answer of a good conscience, even baptism doth now save us, as it is a figure of salvation by Christ."

6. The purport, end or design of the ordinance appears to be to point out, or shadow forth, the forgiveness or remission of sins, and the being cleansed from them. Hence the propriety of scripture expressions, which are like the following: The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, *Mark* i. 4. Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, *Acts* xxii. 16. Here it is worthy of the critical reader's notice, that the word translated, *wash away*, is *apolouai*, which signifies to wash clean, or to wash out a stain, as well as to wash away. It is also worthy to be observed, that the word *louō*, whence this is derived, is the only word, or theme, save *baptizō*, which, in the New-Testament, signifies to wash the body. This being well considered, it cannot be doubted, but baptism is a most significant representation of the remission of sin, or cleansing from it.

Lastly. The purport, end and design of the ordinance of baptism appears to be, for an open and manifest declaration that those who receive it, do heartily, and of a ready mind, put on Christ, enter into his service, receive him to be their Prophet, Priest and King, and covenant to be for him, and for him only. Accordingly it is said, As many as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ: They have put on his name, his self-denying profession, his suffering, despised, but glorious cause.

Is the purport, end and design of baptism as hath been now stated? then the mode is immersion; and those who change the *ordinance* from *dipping* to *sprinkling*, and apply it to unbelievers, *pervert* the *ordinance*, lose its import, and make it quite another thing. This we have, for years, ignorantly done.

We will now attend to to the arguments, which the late Rev. John Cleaveland hath left us in support of *sprinkling*, as being authentic baptism. This Mr. Cleaveland was, and I believe justly too, esteemed as one of the most pious and faithful servants of Christ. Whilst I was favoured with a personal acquaintance with him, he stood very high in my estimation, for his unaffected piety, and fervent simplicity, as a preacher of the everlasting gospel. I still retain the same opinion of the good man. But great and good men are not always wise. In any instance where their wisdom hath failed them, we should be careful how we follow. The Bereans would not take Paul for a guide, without first bringing him to the standard of divine truth. The Bereans were justified. Should we treat Mr. C. in the same way, he could not, and I am inclined to think, he would not, though he were living, condemn us. I might let his works and arguments in support of sprinkling, sleep, were it not, that some of you, my people, and perhaps others, may by them, in one particular, be kept from beholding Christ, as in an open glass.

The good man's object was, to prove that baptism by sprinkling is authentic, or is scriptural; or that sprinkling is baptism.

I will now lay before you his supposed strong arguments by which he supports the validity of sprinkling for baptizing. After stating the principles of the Baptists, as to the ordinance now considering, his

1st. Argument is, "Their learned men know that the word *baptizō* in *Luke* xi. 38, and *baptismous* in *Mark* vii. 2—5, are used to signify the same as *niptō* is, i. e. proper washing, or making clean by the application of water, in cases that do not necessarily require dipping as the mode of washing." The answer to this is: That neither the learned men among the Baptists, nor the learned among any other class of men, know any such thing. Besides, *baptisthē*, in *Luke*, and *baptismous*, in *Mark*, have reference to, and mean, a ceremonial, a religious, or rather, as may be more properly called in these instances, a superstitious washing. What is meant by a ceremonial washing, you may see by looking into the ceremonial law: *Levit.* xi. 32, and in *Numb.* xix. 19, where you will find that this ceremonial washing was, to put into water, or to bathe one's flesh in water. You hence see that these two passages, with which Mr. Cleave-

land lays the foundation of his support of sprinkling for baptism, utterly fail him, and come in as auxiliaries to confirm immersion as the only scripture baptism. I will not say that *niptō* is never used to signify ceremonial washing, and so intend the washing, or putting the hands into water, *(pugmē)* with abundance of exactness, as Dr. Doddridge expounds it, or up to the elbows, as L'Enfant renders it. But one thing is evident to all who will examine the texts, and compare them with the ceremonial washings of the ceremonial law, in conformity with which the Jewish doctors meant to have their traditional ceremonies, that *baptizō* and *baptismos* are not used in the sense in which *niptō* generally is. In every point of view, Mr. Cleaveland's texts utterly fail him, and go to destroy the custom or tradition he brought them to support. Besides, I do not find that *baptizō* is used, in any place, for washing the hands, or for washing or dipping a part of the body, or any other thing. Mr. Cleaveland's

2d. Argument is built upon *Hebrews* ix. 10. where the Apostle speaks of *(diaphorois baptismois)* divers washings. Here, where the Apostle is speaking of divers ceremonial washings, or bathings, Mr. Cleaveland, without the least possible evidence, concludes the Apostle means divers sprinklings.

The same answer which was given to the first argument belongs to this, as Mr. Cleaveland has produced no evidence, that *(baptismois)* washings, or bathings, means sprinklings, save that in the 13th and 21st verses. The Apostle makes use of the word sprinkle, when speaking of the application of blood, and speaking of the unclean, says, they are *sanctified*, and adds, almost all things are by the law purged, *cathærized*, not *baptized*, with blood. It is not a little surprising that a man of Mr. Cleaveland's good sense should say, and that Dr. Lathrop, and other men of erudition, should follow him, in saying, these different sprinklings, in the 13th and 21st verses, refer to *baptismois*, when, had they looked three words farther, they would have found them to be, *kai dikaiōmesi sarkos*, the liberal English of which is, "The ordinances of God concerning the ceremonial rites of bloody sacrifices!" Had they looked into their Greek testaments, they might, with ease, have seen that their argument would not bear examination. Surely, had these gentlemen had the right of the question, they never would have compelled

the Apoſtle to explain by the ſprinkling of blood, what he meant by bathings or waſhings with water. Perhaps a more forced expoſition of ſcripture is ſeldom heard. Beſides, the Apoſtle told them, by placing what is tranſlated, carnal ordinances, between divers waſhing in the 10th, and ſprinkling in the 13th and 21ſt verſes, that he intended no ſuch thing as they ſuppoſed. If I miſtake not, Mr. C's.

3d. Argument is an attempt to prove that *baptō* and *baptizō* are uſed to ſignify ſomething more than to dip, put into water, &c. When the good man brought forward his argument he forgot—&c.—which belongs to his quotation from Dr. Gale, and which includes immerſion and overwhelming, and which compriſes the whole which Mr. C. has proved that *baptizō* ſignifies. But, waving his forgetfulneſs, we will attend to what he ſays. All which he appears to do here is, to ſhow that *baptō*, or *baptizō*, are uſed to waſh, dip and wet with ſprinkling the dew from heaven, and to overwhelm. That is, *baptō* ſignifies to dip, put into water, wet with the dew of heaven, &c. and *baptizō* ſignifies to dip, put into water and overwhelm. What is the conſequence? According to Mr. C. it is this: Becauſe *baptō* is ſometimes uſed to ſignify one's being wet with the diſtilling dew of heaven, &c. therefore *baptizō* ſignifies the ſame thing: Becauſe *baptō* ſignifies in one place to waſh without dipping, therefore *baptizō* ſignifies to waſh without dipping; and becauſe *baptō* is ſometimes uſed to ſignify to colour, or ſtain, by aſperſion, or the like, therefore *baptizō* is uſed in the ſame ſenſe; therefore ſprinkling is authentic baptiſm. What evidence, I pray you, my hearers, is there in all this? Yes, what ſhow or appearance of evidence is there in all this? Would ten thouſand ſuch arguments afford you the leaſt conviction, or gain your aſſent, where you had a cent to loſe?

Every perſon of ſenſe, who is acquainted with the Greek, would, generally ſpeaking, allow Mr. C's. premiſes, that *baptō*, in different places, ſignifies the application of water in different ways; and that *baptizō* ſometimes ſignifies overwhelming. But no perſon, who underſtands the matter, will allow his concluſion, for it hath no connexion with the premiſes.

His argument, in plain Engliſh, is this: The verb to wet, ſometimes ſignifies to ſprinkle, as in a heavy dew we ſay it ſprinkles, or wets; the verb to overwhelm, ſometimes ſigni-

fies to cover all over with water, as is the beach, by the flowing of the tide. Of consequence, to overwhelm is to sprinkle; therefore to sprinkle is authentic overwhelming, or baptism. The fallacy of this argument is easily detected, and with the same ease may any one, who knows the different significations of *baptō* and *baptizō*, uncover the fallacy and complete inconclusiveness of Mr. C's. argument.

The plain truth is, he hath done his side a disservice, for by searching he hath found, and implicitly acknowledges, though not intentionally, and (I suppose) without knowing it, that no instance can be found where *baptizō* signifieth the application of water by sprinkling, or any other way, which does not imply overwhelming, or washing, that is, a ceremonial washing, which is bathing, or putting into water. But—

4. There is another argument upon which Mr. Cleaveland chiefly dwells, and upon which he appears greatly to rest the defence of his whole cause. It is his strong hold against immersion, and for sprinkling; and it is this: Baptism with water, or baptism as a Christian ordinance, is to signify Christ's baptizing with the Holy Ghost. I have no where found that he hath proved that this is the great and principal thing which baptism signifies; nor do I by any means obtain conviction that the mode of baptizing is to be determined, with certainty, from this particular thing, even should it be granted that one important design of baptism is to signify Christ's baptizing with the Holy Ghost. But, as Mr. C. seems to depend upon the strength of this argument more than he does upon the strength of any other, we will grant for the present, that baptism with water was appointed particularly, if not mainly, to set forth the mode in which Christ baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

Now the great question is, In what manner or mode, by sprinkling or overwhelming, did Christ Jesus baptize with the Holy Ghost? Mr. C. in his treatise, replies abundantly, by sprinkling, certainly. We will put this subject to the test, by instancing the most remarkable season which ever was, in which Christ, in a most remarkable, public and astonishing degree was baptizing with the Holy Ghost. I presume were Mr. C. now alive he could not, with any face of propriety, object against taking a sample for the whole, the most remarkable instance which ever hath been, and, perhaps, which ever will be exhibited of Christ's baptizing

with the Holy Ghoſt. I am willing to ſubmit the ſtrong argument of Mr. C. to this great ſample of Chriſt's baptizing with the Holy Ghoſt. Are not all you, my hearers, willing to leave the weight of his argument to ſuch a deciſion? I am perſuaded you all ſay, Yes.

We will then bring his argument to the propoſed teſt. The inſtance which we will take, for ſurely it is the moſt aſtoniſhing one, is that which Chriſt foretold, as related, Acts i. 5. "John truly baptized with water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, not many days hence." The accompliſhment of this prediction and promiſe we have related in the four firſt verſes of the next chapter. It is thus; When the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And ſuddenly there was a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing, mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt.

Here was truly a wonderful inſtance of Chriſt's baptizing with the Holy Ghoſt.

Here 1. All the houſe was filled with the ſound, wind or Spirit from heaven. 2. Cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. 3. They were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt.

We here ſee that they were all overwhelmed; for all the houſe, where they were ſitting, was filled; and not only were they all overwhelmed, but they were alſo filled.

It is left with you to determine, what becomes of Mr. C's. argument, upon which he lays ſo much ſtreſs, and of which he ſpeaks with ſo much confidence, and not unfrequently with an air of triumph. Is there a word about ſprinkling in any part of it? or is there any thing which looks like it? Does it not look conſiderably like immerſion, or overwhelming? At leaſt, does it not favour immerſion, or overwhelming, as much as it does ſprinkling? If ſo, then it proves nothing for ſprinkling. It is left with you to determine which ſide it favours.

It is poſſible, however, that ſome of you may ſuppoſe, that Mr. C. might intend *that* baptiſm, if it may be ſo called, which the Holy Ghoſt miniſters, when it creates the ſoul anew. To this ſuppoſition, I will juſt obſerve, "The wind bloweth (ſaith Chriſt) where it liſteth, and thou heareſt

the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell *whence* it *cometh*, or *whither* it *goeth*; ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit." Would it not be extreme folly to ſuppoſe that water baptiſm repreſents the *operations* of the Spirit, when none can know whence it cometh, or whither it goeth? It may repreſent the effect of the Spirit's operations, and it is called, a being born, not ſprinkled, of the Spirit.

5. In reading Mr. C's. defence of ſprinkling, as being authentic baptiſm, I noticed but one more diſtinct argument, and it is this:

"*Niptō*, *baptizō*, *louō*, *brechō*, *plunō*, or *apoplunō*, all ſignify to waſh." The concluſion which he draws from this is, in ſhort, the following: To baptize is not to immerſe, but to ſprinkle. I ſee no connexion between his premiſe and concluſion. Beſides, Mr. C. tell us, page 80, that the Jews, by adhering to the tradition of the elders, obſerved the waſhing of hands, and divers other things, as a religious ceremony. Now, if all the words which Mr. C. mentions, ſignify to waſh, and yet ſome of them ſignify common waſhing, and another, and that *baptizō*, ſignifies ceremonial waſhing, and that be to put into water, as is the caſe, what does his argument prove? It proves juſt nothing to his point. Had he proved, what he hath not even attempted, that they all ſignify the ſame kind of waſhing, and that the waſhing ſignified was not immerſion, but ſprinkling only, then his concluſion would have followed, that ſprinkling is baptiſm.

If the above arguments will not ſupport Mr. Cleaveland's theory, it muſt all come down; for they are the ſubſtance, if not all the arguments, which he hath adduced, and I preſume better cannot be found.

I thought to have taken Dr. Lathrop's arguments upon the ſame ſubject, into conſideration: but upon re-examining them I find there is no material diſſimilarity between his and Mr. C's.; they therefore both ſtand or fall together. A word or two may be here added.

Dr. Lathrop aſſures us that Cyprian, who wrote within about one hundred and fifty years of the apoſtles, ſpeaking of ſprinkling, ſays, "In the ſacrament of ſalvation (that is baptiſm) when *neceſſity compels*, the ſhorteſt ways of tranſacting divine matters do, by God's grace, confer the whole benefit." The Doctor adds, "The ancients *practiſed immerſion*."*

* Pages 24, 25.

By this quotation of the Doctor's from Cyprian, and confeſſion of his own, being put together, it appears at once that all his preceding arguments are erroneous; for Cyprian does not intimate that ſprinkling was from heaven, but ſays it was from neceſſity. Beſides, his calling baptiſm the ſacrament of ſalvation, ſhows us the error, whence the neceſſity of ſprinkling came, namely, a belief that the ordinance of baptiſm was neceſſary to ſalvation. This being the caſe, and it alſo being true, as the Doctor acknowledges, that the ancients practiſed immerſion, ſave when neceſſity compelled, as they erroneouſly ſuppoſed, the conſequence is fairly this, that immerſion is from heaven, the ancients being judges; and that ſprinkling is from men, from neceſſity, or rather from error.

I thought to have added no more upon the Doctor's mode of Chriſtian baptiſm. However, one argument ought to be taken out of his hands, leſt it miſguide ſome of his readers. He tells us that *baptizō*, in Mark vii. and Luke xi. is uſed to ſignify the application of water to the hands. The only anſwer needed is, It is not thus ſaid, in Mark, or Luke, or in any other part of the Bible. When the Doctor ſhall re-examine the paſſages, he will probably ſee the miſtake.

Will gentlemen, and Chriſtians too, forever contend againſt *immerſion*, the inſtitution of heaven, and for *ſprinkling*, which hath nothing but *error* and *convenience* for its ſupport!

SERMON V.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19, 20.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

I HAVE confidence in you, brethren, that ye will keep the ordinances, as I ſhall deliver them to you, and prove them to be from the word of the Lord.

One thing I would ſtill know of you, my brethren, whether you, like the more noble Bereans, will receive the word with readineſs, ſearching the ſcriptures daily, that you may know the truth of what you hear.

You will bear in mind, that whoſoever loveth father or mother, houſe or lands, wife or children, more than Chriſt, is not worthy of him. If, through affection for any of theſe, you ſhould refuſe to obey Chriſt, it will be too evident that you love them more than you do him, and ſo are not worthy of him.

Should you love any erroneous belief and practice more than you do the truths of Chriſt, you will, ſo far as you manifeſt it, prove that you are not worthy of him.

Should you deſpiſe me for delivering and vindicating the truths of Chriſt to you, you will at the ſame time deſpiſe him. You will therefore give good heed to what you ſay, and to what you do in this matter; for if it be of God, it will ſtand, and none can overthrow it. It is hoped none of you will be found fighting againſt God.

This diſcourſe may contain a review of what we have paſſed over, together with ſome application. In my firſt diſcourſe to you on the ſubject, which we have ſtill before us, the following are the principal things to which we attended.

I. I propoſed a number of plain truths, conſidered to be as firſt principles, for your attention.

1. Baptiſm is a poſitive inſtitution, about which we can know nothing, as to its being a Chriſtian ordinance, but

from what Christ, and those inspired by his Spirit, have taught us.

2. All which we are required to believe and practise, with respect to the Christian ordinance of baptism, is declared to us by Jesus Christ, and by his forerunner and apostles.

3. When Jesus Christ first instituted the ordinance of baptism, he no doubt delivered his mind so clearly and fully upon the subject, that his disciples and immediate followers understood and practised as he would have them.

4. Every thing which hath, by the precepts and commandments of men, been added since, is aside from the ordinance, and makes no part of it.

5. No man, nor body of men, hath any more authority to add to or diminish from this ordinance, than they have to institute a new one and call it Christ's.

6. Whenever, and wherever, the ordinance of baptism is so changed as to lose the intent of the institution, then and there the ordinance is lost, and becomes no Christian ordinance at all.

II. I defined for your information a number of words which appertain to the ordinance of baptism.

We found all these to be just as we might expect to have found them, provided immersion be baptism, or the mode in which it is administered.

Baptisterion, a place in which to wash the body. *Baptism*, immersion, or dipping one all over in water. *Baptizō* signifies to dip, or wash, the body all over in water. *Louō* (a word several times used in reference to, or signifying the same, as baptism) is, to wash, to rinse, to bathe, &c. Then

III. I set before you all the texts in the New-Testament which relate either to the baptism of John, or to that of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the next place, I proposed for your meditation the passages of scripture where washing is mentioned, and the Greek words which are used. I then called your attention to those passages in which sprinkling is mentioned, and to the Greek words which are made use of. *Lastly*, I read to you those scriptures where to dip is mentioned, and also the Greek words which are rendered to dip.

In not one of the places, where the ordinance of baptism is brought to view, do we find one word about sprinkling, or any thing which looks like it. In every place, where to dip is mentioned, we find a near relation to baptism; every

word which is uſed, coming from the ſame *root* or theme, from which *baptizō* comes.

As to the word *waſh*, we find no relation between the words which ſignify to waſh, and thoſe which ſignify to baptize, ſave in thoſe few inſtances where the meaning is to waſh the body, or put into water, or waſh a thing all over. When we come to the Greek words which ſignify to ſprinkle, we find no ſimilarity, or likeneſs, between them and the word to baptize.

In all the places where baptizing is mentioned, not a word is uſed which looks like ſprinkling; where ſprinkling is mentioned, there is not a word uſed which appears like baptiſm.

In my next diſcourſe, I produced my evidence, that my definitions of baptiſm and to baptize were accurate and juſt. I dwelt largely upon this evidence, for the merit of the whole ſubject depends greatly, if not entirely, upon the determinate meaning of the words, which our Lord uſed in the inſtitution of the ordinance, and when ſpeaking of it. When we know the determinate ſignification of his words, we know what he ſays, and what we ought to underſtand by the words which he uſes. The evidence which I produced, was, in ſhort, the following.

1. The Greek Lexicon, Butterworth's Concordance, Bailey's and Entick's Dictionaries, bear their united teſtimony, that the plain, literal, and common, if not univerſal, ſignification of the words *baptiſm* and *to baptize*, is immerſion and to immerſe, bury in water, to dip, or to plunge, a perſon all over in water. Here are four learned and poſitive witneſſes to the ſame thing. Indeed, they give no other ſignification, ſave it be to waſh, which we have ſeen intends a ceremonial waſhing, which is to put into water, or to bathe.

2. I repeated ſome of the attendant or circumſtantial facts, which have relation to the ordinance of baptiſm. John baptized IN the river Jordan. He was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, becauſe there was *much water* there. The word *baptiſtery* ſignifies a place in which to waſh the body all over. *Baptiſm* ſignifies to dip, to plunge, immerſe, or to waſh the body all over in water. *Baptizer* ſignifies one who dips, plunges, or waſhes the body all over in water. *To baptize* ſignifies to immerſe, plunge under water, or under any other liquid thing, or to dip, or to put into water. To be

baptized is to be plunged, immerſed, or waſhed all over in water.

Theſe things being true, is it not eaſy to determine what the ordinance of baptiſm ſignifies?

3. The words *baptiſmos* and *baptizō* have two, and only two, tranſlations in the New-Teſtament. Theſe two are *baptiſm* and *waſhing*. Where their meaning is waſhing, or where they are thus tranſlated, it is a ceremonial waſhing, which is to put into water, or bathe the fleſh in water, as you may ſee, *Levit.* xi. 32. *Numb.* xix. 19. When they are tranſlated *baptiſm*, or to *baptize*, the thing intended is the baptiſm of water, of fire, of ſufferings, or of the Holy Ghoſt.

4. I brought forward ſeveral noted witneſſes, to bear their united teſtimony, that I had given a juſt definition of the word *baptizō*: theſe were, John Calvin, Zanchius, and Dr. Owen.

In the next place I mentioned to you that Paul repeatedly uſes the word *louō*, where he means the ſame thing as where he uſes the word *baptizō*; that he uſes theſe words as ſignifying the ſame thing. Whereas, *louō* ſignifies to waſh and to bathe the body in water, and conſequently *baptizō* means the ſame.

Laſtly. I brought forward Paul's expoſition of the word *baptiſm*, and ſhowed you, that he expounds it, as being buried with Chriſt in baptiſm, or immerſion.

In my diſcourſe, which I next preached to you, I produced evidence, that the apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, not only underſtood the matter as I have deſcribed it, but practiſed accordingly.

In ſupport of the apoſtle's practice, I obſerved, that the word *louō*, of determinate ſignification, which they uſed to ſignify their practice, or what was done by them in baptiſm, determines or fixes their practice to be immerſion. I farther obſerved, that they were commanded to practiſe baptiſm, or to baptize, as I have deſcribed it; and that the ſcriptures teſtify, that they thus did; and alſo that the apoſtle's ſay, the mode of baptizing in their day was, by burying the ſubjects, in baptiſm.

For witneſſes that the primitive church practiſed immerſion, we have Moſheim, Bailey, Calvin, Baxter, and many others, all agreeing in this one point, that the mode of baptizing, or baptiſm itſelf, among the ancients, was immerſion.

We have also evidence that the church thus practised, for thirteen hundred years, some extreme cases excepted. Moreover we have evidence that all the church, in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa, save that part of it, which is now, or hath been, under the bewildering power of the popes, do now, and ever have, practised immersion.

Besides all this, the very reasons which the Pedobaptists assign, why they have laid aside immersion, show that sprinkling is not commanded by the Lord, but is taught by the precepts of men.

You see we have an ocean of witnesses and evidence against us; and all, or nighly so, from our own denomination of Christians. What a world of evidence might we reasonably expect that the Baptists would be able to bring for themselves and against us and our practice, would we hear them, when our own side bring so much against their own practice and for the Baptists! Besides, this evidence appears to stand in its full force against us, there being no opposite evidence to weaken its force. Indeed we are, in this matter, much like criminals, who plead, at least the leaders of them, guilty to the whole indictment. However, some have made a full plea of not guilty, but in part. At the same time, numbers of them, in their plea, have convicted themselves of being guilty throughout.

In the last discourse, after holding to your view the purport, end and design of baptism, I examined one of their pleas of, not guilty. But what evidence did the good man give of his innocence? Can the largest stretch of charity allow more than this, *he knew not what he did?* Was truth ever brought to such straits as to require to be supported by such arguments?

APPLICATION.

FROM a review of the whole subject, the following appear to flow as necessary consequences.

1. Whether we allow immersion to be the scripture mode of baptism, and the only one which it requires, or not; one thing is clear, that we have as much evidence of its being so, as we could have, on supposition that it were.

The scriptures declare, in various ways, that this is the mode, and mention no other. The scriptures expound themselves to mean immersion, or burying.

We find not a single trace, in all the scriptures, where the ordinance is spoken of, of any thing short of immersion being mentioned.

Good men, who are skilful in the true import of words, have agreed, that the plain, literal and accurate meaning of the word, to baptize, is to immerse or bury in water, &c. Nor have any been able to show that in any part of God's word it hath any opposite meaning or application.

The church of Jesus Christ have, in all ages, understood the matter of baptism as I have explained it. We must, however, except, for the last three or five hundred years, many of those branches of the church, which have been, or are now, under the jurisdiction of the church of Rome. The purport, end and design of baptism also intimate to us, that this is the manner of baptizing.

Indeed, if there be any words in the Greek language by which the Lord of the Baptismal Institution could have told us what he intended, the words used do this. For there are no two words in the language, or, at least, none which have come to our knowledge, which so literally, so uniformly, and so expressly, signify to immerse, or wash, or bathe the body in water, as do the words *baptizō* and *louō*. Hence, if immersion be baptism, the Lord, if I may so say, could not have told us of it in the New-Testament, if the words, chosen by the Holy Ghost, do not afford this information. If baptism be immersion, then the two most suitable words have been chosen to express it; but if sprinkling be baptism, two words which were farther from the point could not have been found. We find no instance, in the Bible, where they are thus used. In short, no two words, which mention the application of water in any way, are farther from the idea of sprinkling, than are those two which are used when baptism is intended. It therefore appears, that whilst we have used sprinkling for baptism, we have departed from the plain and primitive import of the words used, as far as we could without a complete omission of water. None can be at a farther remove from the instituted, scripture baptism, than we have been, without denying it in whole.

2. Error is very insinuating and deceiving. Surely it hath proved thus in the subject of sprinkling.

Cyprian, who wrote within about a hundred and fifty years of the apostles, speaking of sprinkling, says, as quoted

by Dr. Lathrop, "In the ſacrament of *ſalvation*, (i. e. baptiſm) when *neceſſity compels*, the ſhorteſt ways of tranſacting divine matters, do, by God's grace, confer the whole benefit." Here we ſee the origin of ſprinkling for baptiſm.

It was an early error in the church, that baptiſm was neceſſary to ſalvation. Hence, when it was judged, that life would be endangered by immerſion, the perſon muſt either loſe his life by baptiſm, or loſe his ſoul for want of being baptized, or ſome other mode muſt be invented. Or, if the ſick perſon was nighly dying, he muſt be baptized without immerſion, or probably loſe his ſoul, before he could be conveyed where the ordinance might be adminiſtered. Under theſe circumſtances, man's fruitful invention deviſed ſprinkling as a ſubſtitute for baptiſm. Here is the origin of ſprinkling, as the ancients have told us.

In proceſs of time, ſound ladies and gentlewomen wiſhed to have ſprinkling ſubſtituted for baptiſm in their behalf; afterwards others, till at laſt, it became a general cuſtom in many of the European nations. In the mean time, the Baptiſts, and many others, objected againſt the practice, as being contrary from the command of Chriſt. Hence aroſe the neceſſity of defending it, or elſe having it conſidered as a departure from the faith. Matters being thus, the invention of many was in full exerciſe to defend ſprinkling, as being of divine origin. A number of ceremonial rites of the Levitical law were preſſed into this ſervice; ſeveral paſſages of the New-Teſtament were wreſted from their natural meaning to a forced interpretation; and out of the motley mixture were formed what were ſtyled *arguments*; but ſuch arguments can ſtand no longer than while prejudice lives to ſupport them.

However, the moſt diſagreeable part is, a good number of very pious and learned men have been carried away in this whirlpool of deception. Their being deceived has deceived others; and we are, or have been, among the deceived.

3. Sprinkling is not from heaven, but of men. This too, if I miſtake not, by the fully and fairly implied conceſſion of thoſe, who have written in its defence.

If from heaven, why, in the firſt place, uſe it only when neceſſity compelled! as was ſuppoſed to ſave ſouls from hell? If from heaven, why, afterwards, uſe it only in caſes

of less urgent necessity? If from heaven, why bring in the coldness of the country as an excuse for using it? If from heaven, why not mentioned in the institution of the ordinance, or in some passage where mention is made of baptism, or in some other place in all the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles? If from heaven, why not intimated as being so, by those who first introduced it? If sprinkling be from heaven, why so many *inconclusive* arguments in its support? Is the word of God deficient in this particular, and hath it revealed what cannot be supported by it? If from heaven, why not commanded, enjoined, required, or so much as once hinted, as being a mode of a gospel ordinance, in any part of that revelation which we have received from heaven?

4. Another consequence is, That the scripture mode of baptism is immersion, and for aught we know, the only mode, and necessary to the administration of the ordinance. This is the plain, literal, scripture sense of baptism; therefore this is the plain, literal, scripture mode. The scriptures mention no other mode; therefore this may be, and is, for aught appears, the only scripture mode.

5. From what we have gone over, one thing appears certain: That Christ never commanded any of his followers to administer any gospel ordinance by sprinkling, and, at the same time, to say, *I baptize*. For to do thus would be to command them to do *one thing*, and to say that they did *another*.

To *sprinkle* is to *rantize*, which hath no visible connexion with baptism. To say, Christ commanded his disciples to rantize, and, at the same time, to say, We baptize, is what no Christian would, knowingly, be willing to say. This would, if I mistake not, be making Christ the minister of sin. But what I have long, implicitly, though ignorantly, done, others may still do.

6. Another consequence is, custom hath great influence upon the human mind. It surely hath upon us. For, even after we have full evidence that sprinkling, for baptism, is not from heaven, but was the offspring of error, and fostered by the dark ages of Papistical usurpation, we are hardly persuaded to renounce it. But, my brethren, my expectation is, that after you have searched your Bibles through and through, and find nothing of it there, you will give it up.

Should the Lord inquire of us, why we ſubſtitute ſprinkling for baptizing, and ſay unto us, Whence is this ſubſtitution, from heaven, or of men? Would there not be great reaſonings among us what anſwer to return? Should we ſay, From heaven; he might reply, How do you prove it? Should we ſay, Of men, then might he aſk, Why do you practiſe it?

7. Another conſequence is, we have the ſame kind of evidence, and perhaps more of it, that baptiſm is to be adminiſtered by immerſion, or dipping, or putting into water, than we have to ſupport any other goſpel precept, or practice. The evidence which we have, in either caſe, is the ſignification of the words which are uſed to point out the thing to be believed, or practiſed.

Were it not for the influence of habit, or cuſtom, you would as readily and naturally conclude, from the very words uſed, that immerſion, or dipping, or waſhing the body in water, was the meaning of baptiſm, as that a religious eating of bread, and drinking of wine, in commemoration of our dying Lord, was the way to obſerve the Lord's ſupper.

8. We appear to be brought to this dilemma: We muſt either embrace the tradition of the elders, for the rule of one part of our practice; or we muſt no more ſprinkle, and call it baptiſm.

9. Another conſequence is, Thoſe, who firſt introduced ſprinkling for baptizing, had no more right ſo to do, than they had to inſtitute a new rite, or ordinance, and call it Chriſt's.

What authority have we to follow their erroneous and hurtful practice?

10. We have another conſequence worthy of conſideration, and it is this: The Chriſtian ordinance of baptiſm is a moſt ſolemn and ſignificant ordinance, and of very high importance.

I ſpeak not of the viſible, or actual, adminiſtration of it, in particular; for I never ſaw it adminiſtered, as Chriſt hath delivered it to his people: But I refer to the purport, end and deſign of it. It is, among many other things, the great dividing line, which Heaven hath appointed to be drawn between the viſible kingdom of Immanuel, and the men of this world. Doubtleſs there are a large number who belong to Chriſt's inviſible kingdom, who are not,

strictly speaking, or regularly, in his kingdom visibly, having not submitted to this ordinance, which is the great and important line of distinction.

11. It appears that we are, truly, in a trying state. We must depart, in one instance, from a long habit, or continue to do as we have done, and yet not be able to vindicate, by the scriptures of truth, our own conduct.

Lastly. We come, at length, to the answer of this old and difficult and perplexing question: Where, and when, did the religious sect, called Baptists, arise? The answer is, plainly, this. They arose in Judea, at the time when John came, preaching in the wilderness the baptism of repentance. I mention this consequence with considerable assurance, because the New-Testament abundantly favours it, and no man is able to contradict me. Should any attempt it, he will fail for want of evidence. I should, not long since, have been gratified, could I have found their origin any where in the dark ages of Popery, or at the commencement of the reformation, among the famous enthusiasts of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, or Westphalia. But, after having long pursued the perplexing research, I found their *origin*, where I least of all expected it, in Enon and Jordan.

A few questions are now to close the present subject.

1. Is not immersion the scripture baptism?

2. Is sprinkling a mode of baptizing warranted by scripture? If so, where?

3. Are Old-Testament rites to explain New-Testament ordinances? Is Moses to correct what Christ hath left incomplete? Is it so?

4. Will Christ approve of that practice of men, which so changes his positive institution, as to lose, greatly to lose, the purport, end and design of it?

5. Was it ever right, and is it now, for men to change what Christ hath commanded to be in perpetual observation? Did the supposed *extreme cases* justify this change at first, and will trifling inconveniences justify us now?

6. Will it be wise and safe for us continually to forsake the commandment of Christ for the precepts of men?

7. Do you, my brethren, or can you, blame me for wishing you to keep the ordinances of Christ as he hath delivered them to the saints?

8. Should I have manifeſted myſelf your friend, or Chriſt's, if, after having found ſuch a precious, new and old *treaſure* in his word, as is the Chriſtian ordinance of baptiſm, I had not ventured my life, or in other words, my reputation, my eaſe, my property, and my every worldly conſideration, to bring it forth to your view and acceptance, that you might more fully walk in all the ſtatutes and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs?

One requeſt, my brethren, I pray you to grant me, and it is this: Search the ſcriptures devoutly, and follow me ſo far as I follow Jeſus Chriſt, your Lord and mine.

SERMON VI.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19, 20.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

I HAVE already observed to you that Christ Jesus, the Head of the church, and Lord of all, was now constituting his present and succeeding disciples to be apostles unto all nations. My text is their commission, and general and particular orders. In it they are directed—

I. To go and disciple all nations.

II. To baptize them in the name of the Father, &c.

III. He directs these newly constituted apostles, and all their successors, to teach their baptized disciples to observe all things whatsoever he had given in commandment.

Lastly. For their encouragement and comfort, he adds, And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

What I purposed to say to you, particularly, upon the second proposition, I have said. I now recur to the

I. Which contains Christ's command to *his disciples* to go and *disciple* all nations.

I have already showed you what baptism is, and the design of it. I am now, if the Lord will, to lay open what is commanded to be done before baptism be administered, also the evidence which the Lord may afford me to prove to you that my instruction is of him.

Your feelings, my brethren and people, have no doubt been highly wrought up, whilst I have opened before you one of the laws of Christ's kingdom amongst men. I have still more things to say unto you respecting the rules and regulations of this kingdom. I pray the Lord, that your minds may be so prepared to hear, that you may not forsake me and flee, as many of Christ's professed friends did,

when he preached on a subject which greatly crossed their prejudices and carnal expectations.

Your busy minds, no doubt, will, before you are aware, be inquiring what great and good men, in our days and in the days of our fathers, have said and thought of these things; but we should look farther back than to our forefathers. The man Christ Jesus, and his inspired prophets and apostles, should be the men of our counsel. Should I speak according to these, you may hearken to me with safety: if contrary, convict me by the word and testimony of Jesus Christ; for I appeal to these, for by them I ought to be judged.

One request, my hearers, I pray you to grant me; namely—Lay prejudice aside, and let scripture, reason and common sense be heard for a few minutes.

Surely you must consider my case more trying than any of yours. For it is, perhaps, as difficult for me to combat my own prejudices and carnal feelings, as it is for any of you to contend with his: Besides this, I have to look your prejudices in the face, while I venture to bring any of your old practices to the scriptures for trial. Yes, more than all this, I have many trials to encounter, which you have not, nor can have.

I should not have made the attempt to bring our former practice to the standard for trial, had not my difficulties been so great, that I durst proceed no farther, without proving my works. One of my practices hath been weighed in the balance, and is found wanting. I am now, if my heart deceive me not, willing to lead another of my works, or the subjects on which some of my works have been, to the bar for trial. If this shall be found of wood, hay or stubble, may the fire of truth burn it up, and may the fire of love cause me to rejoice while it shall be consuming.

The proposition which will bring this other of my works to the trial, is—

Christ commands his ministers to go and disciple all nations. I have engaged to be one of these ministers. The command is, therefore, binding upon me. I have gone forth, that I might obey. The great thing to be determined is, whether I have understood what it is to disciple, or to make disciples, and have practised accordingly.

The important question to be decided is just this: If I disciple any of you who are parents, do I, as a necessary consequence, disciple all your children and households?

The only difficulty, in this question, relates to children and households. What it is to disciple the master of a family, is a thing in which Christians generally agree.

I ought just to remark to you, that *matheteusate*, to teach, is, in its literal and genuine sense, to disciple, or so to teach as to make disciples.

To bring the question before you as fully as I can, I wish you, each one of you, to fix his attention upon some one family in this town, in which family not a Christian is to be found. If each one have his mind fixed upon such a Christless household, I will now put the question:—

Suppose I, instrumentally, disciple the father of this family, do I, as a certain consequence, make disciples of the whole family?

Before you determine the question, it may be well to fix in your minds what a disciple is. Let the scriptures speak. The *disciples* were called Christians first at Antioch, Acts xi. 26. The commission which Christ gave to the first ministers, and to all succeeding ones, as recorded Mark xvi. 15, 16, is, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that *believeth*, &c. Here a believer is the same as a *disciple*. Here we see a disciple, in the sense of my text, is a believer, a believer in Christ, a Christian. This is the idea which the New-Testament, from beginning to end, gives us of a disciple. There is, however, mention made of disciples, who were so but by profession, or who were visible disciples only; not having the love of God in them.

Now try the question with respect to both sorts of these disciples.

Suppose I, instrumentally, disciple the father of a Christless family, do I, as a necessary consequence, make Christians of all in his house? You will please to make up your minds, on this question, decidedly.

Suppose again, that I, instrumentally, disciple the father of a Christless family, do I, as a necessary consequence, make *visible* disciples of all his family? Let your minds be clearly determined as to the answer.

Once more; suppose I, by delivering the Lord's message, convert, or make a disciple of the father of a Christless

family, do I, of neceſſary conſequence, make any one of his houſehold beſides himſelf a diſciple?*

Let ſcripture, let reaſon, let common ſenſe, let any thing ſpeak, which will ſpeak the truth, and determine theſe queſtions. Conſider, take advice, and ſpeak your minds.

Can you ſuppoſe, or can you not, that to make a father of a family a diſciple, his wife, his ſervants, and his children, are all diſciples of courſe, or of neceſſary conſequence?

Is not this a clear caſe? and yet the great and momentous ſubject before us turns altogether upon the anſwer of this queſtion.

If diſcipling the father of a family renders all his houſe diſciples, they are all ſubjects of baptiſm, they have the ſcripture qualification for it; if it do not, then they have not the qualification which my text requires to be in thoſe who are baptized.

You will judge for yourſelves whether houſeholds do thus become diſciples; as for the reſt, the ſcriptures determine: if they be diſciples, they are to be baptized; if not, they are not to be.

I know what your anſwer muſt be, for by inconteſtable facts, in this town, the diſcipling of a father of a family does not diſciple his houſehold; it does not even make them viſible diſciples, or give them even the appearance of being ſo.

The following is for evidence, that perſons muſt be made diſciples before they are baptized.

1. John made his hearers diſciples before he baptized them. He required, in order for baptiſm, that they ſhould bring forth fruits meet for, or as evidence of, repentance, Matt. iii. 8. and Luke iii. 8.

2. Chriſt's diſciples baptized none but ſuch as were made diſciples firſt, John iv. 1, 2.

3. Chriſt, in my text, gives no liberty to baptize any but ſuch as are firſt diſcipled. Yes, he commands his miniſters to diſciple before they baptize.

The account which Mark gives us of the Apoſtles' commiſſion, and of the Baptiſmal Inſtitution, is confirming evidence in this matter, xvith chapter, 15th and 16th verſes: 'Preach the goſpel to every creature: He that believeth

* Prejudice may reply, You are to diſciple the houſehold by baptizing them. This contradicts my text, that ſays, diſciple then baptize.

and is baptized,' &c. Here believing is put before baptism. The way adopted by some to avoid the force of this text is, if they be baptized, say they, no matter when, before or after believing. This way of getting clear of the difficulty appears neither wise nor candid; for it injures the plain meaning of the text, and makes Matthew's and Mark's account of the commission to disagree.

What remains are a number of plain truths, facts and consequences, which have a more near or remote relation with the subject on hand, and may serve to throw light upon it.

In the FIRST place, we may take notice of two particulars, which perhaps have not been sufficiently noticed.

One is, the ceremonial law, and the covenant of circumcision which was annexed to it, appear to be disannulled and past away.

The following may make this matter plain: The disannulling or abolishing of the law we see, Heb. vii. 18. There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. Also Gal. iii. 19, Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, *till* the *seed* should *come* to *whom* the *promise* was made. What seed this is, to whom the promise was made, we are told in the 16th verse of the same chapter, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made: He saith not to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." We hence see, that Christ was the seed to whom the promises were made, and that the *law* (the ceremonial law) was added because of transgressions, till the seed, i. e. Christ, should come. It is hence plain, that the ceremonial law was to continue no longer than till Christ came.

The covenant of circumcision appears to be annexed to this law. For says Jesus Christ, John vii. 23, If a man on the sabbath day *receive circumcision*, that the *law* of *Moses* should not be *broken*, are ye angry at me? &c.

That this covenant of circumcision, or the Sinai covenant, which includes it, hath passed away, or is disannulled, see Heb. viii. 13. 'In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old: now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.'

Besides, circumcision is evidently a very important part of that law, which is disannulled; for, saith Paul to the Ga-

latians, chap. v. 2, 3. If ye be *circumcised* Christ shall *profit* you *nothing*. For I testify again, says he, to every man that is *circumcised*, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

It is hence plain, that the ceremonial law is no longer binding; and that the covenant of circumcision, which was incorporated with it, hath vanished away.

The other particular is this; the promises which were made to Abraham and his seed, were not made to him in *circumcision*, but in *uncircumcision*; and the covenant which was confirmed of God to Abraham in Christ, was while he was in *uncircumcision*, and about twenty-four years before the *covenant* of *circumcision* was given. *Rom.* iv. 8, 9, 10. —*Gal.* iii. 16, 17.—*Gen.* xii. 3, 4, 7, and xvii. 10, 17.

Moreover, when Paul speaks of the covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ, he points out the exact year when this was made known or confirmed with Abraham, as though he had a foresight, as certainly the Holy Ghost had, of the contention which should be long continued for want of judiciously understanding what covenant should be disannulled, and what covenant the law could not disannul. He tells us, *Gal.* iii. 17, that this covenant, which cannot be made void, was four hundred and thirty years before the law; whereas the covenant of circumcision was about four hundred and six years before the law, with which circumcision was united.

Seeing matters are thus, what, I pray you, my hearers, have we to do with the covenant of circumcision? If we keep it, Christ shall profit us nothing; if we observe something which we substitute in its place, Christ may profit us as little in such observance.

I know it will be asked, Is not the church the same now that it was in Abraham's day? I answer, yes, and the same that it was in Noah's, Enoch's and Adam's, and the same that it ever will be. It will be asked again, Is not the covenant the same which it was in Abraham's time? Yes, the covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ is unchangeably the same; but the covenant of circumcision which God made with Abraham, renewed with Isaac and Jacob, and solemnized with Israel in the wilderness, (*Deut.* xxix. 10, 11, 12, 13,) is far from being the covenant, the *new covenant*, which God makes with the house of Israel in our day. The covenant of circumcision was, more than 1700 years ago, decaying, waxing old, and ready to

vanish away. But you will again say, Is not the church composed of parents and children, and of households, now, as it was in Abraham's day? Let Paul answer how it was (as touching the gospel) in Abraham's day and after. *Rom.* ix. 6, 7, 8. 'They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they that are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Just so now. The children of God, the children of the promise are counted for the seed, and compose the church; and of those who appear thus should the visible church be made up, and of none else. But, if by the question be meant, Does not church-membership descend from parents to children, and from masters to servants, as it appears to have done under the old covenant of circumcision? The answer is, The New-Testament no where acknowledges, nor does it know, any thing about a church thus made up. I would that all good men would consent to take New-Testament directions and examples by which to constitute and guide New-Testament churches.

But it will be asked once more, Hath not baptism come into the place of circumcision, and to be applied to similar subjects? *Answer.* Circumcision was a positive institution, and so is baptism. Abraham and the Israelites knew nothing to whom circumcision should be administered, but as they received direction from the Divine Institutor; just so it is with respect to the administration of baptism. The Christians at Antioch, the Elders at Jerusalem, the church of Galatia, and Paul and Barnabas, knew nothing of baptism being substituted for circumcision. *Acts* xv. 1 to 35; *Gal.* iii. and v. chapters. We know nothing, and can know nothing, as to whom baptism is to be administered, but from what Christ hath told us as to the subjects. Now—

Secondly, I ask, What evidence have we from the Bible that infants are to be baptized?

You may reply, They are included in the covenant. What covenant? In that of circumcision? Surely not, for that hath vanished away. If you say, In the covenant that was confirmed of God in Christ, I *answer*, It was not this covenant which entitled Abraham's household to circumcision;

therefore, though your children be in this covenant, that does not, of itself, entitle them to baptism; whether baptism be in the place of circumcision, or not. You will then say, What can entitle our children to baptism? *Answer.* Their being disciples, and so coming within the compass, or pale, of the baptismal institution.

As we can know nothing of the subjects of baptism, any more than Abraham and Israel could of the subjects of circumcision, but from what we are informed in the institution, and in what is said upon it, we will inquire what the Bible saith of this matter.

If the Lord, in his word, hath not given us sufficient instruction upon this subject, we must practise in the dark, for we have no where else to go.

We will begin with John. 1. Did he baptize any children? We have no evidence that he did. Besides, he told the multitude which attended his ministry, not to plead Abraham, or Abraham's covenant, as a title to baptism. *Matt.* iii. 7, 8, 9, 10.

2. Did Christ's disciples, whilst he was with them, and whilst they *made* and *baptized* more *disciples* than John, baptize infants, or any visibly unbelieving children? No evidence that they did.

3. Is there any evidence from my text, which contains the words of the institution, that infants, or unbelieving households, were to be baptized? None, but the contrary.

4. Is there any passage in the New-Testament, which commands, or says so much as one word, that infants are to be baptized? Not one.

5. Is there any example, which shows that the apostles baptized any upon the faith of parents, or masters, or upon the faith or promises of any others?

I know, my brethren, there are three instances, which are supposed by some to favour the affirmative of the question. I have rather been of the same opinion. If it be so, may facts convince us.

We will look at each of these examples separately.

The first supposed example we find at Philippi. Here was a woman, named Lydia; she appears to have been a woman of business. She belonged to Thyatira, but was now at Philippi, probably selling her merchandize, with several attendants. The history is thus related, *Acts* xvi. 13th, 14th and 15th verses. "On the sabbath day, we (Paul and

other disciples) went out of the city, by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down, and spake unto the women who resorted thither. And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there."

This is all we know of the matter. She belonged to another city. She worshipped God. She was, on the sabbath day, by the side of a river, where prayer was wont to be made. The Lord opened her heart to attend to what Paul said. Her servants were with her. She had a house, either her own, or one taken for the time. She was baptized, and her household. As to her having infants with her, you can tell, as well as I. Moreover, whether her servants believed the words of Paul, you can, if you attend to the circumstances, form as correct a judgment, perhaps, as any other can make up for you.

The things to be considered are, 1. Lydia was a godly woman. 2. She attended meeting. Paul found her where prayer was wont to be made, where religious women had been accustomed to meet. 3. She, like other religious people, took her household to meeting with her. 4. It appears that Paul baptized none of her household, but such as were with her at the female praying meeting. 5. The strong probability is, that Lydia, being a pious woman, one who worshipped God, would select for her attendants, maidens or servants who also were worshippers of God. In verse 40, we are told, the apostles entered into the house of Lydia, comforted the brethren, &c. You will weigh these circumstances, and make up for yourselves, so far as you can, a righteous judgment.

The next example is recorded in the same chapter, and appears to be in same city. The history of the matter is contained in the 25th verse, and on to the 34th. The noticeable facts, and on which we must make up our judgment, are—The jailer says, Sirs, What must I do to be saved? Paul and Silas answered, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were

in his houſe. And he was baptized, he and all his, ſtraightway—and rejoiced, believing in God with all his houſe.

Here are three things to be put together. 1. The word of the Lord Jeſus was ſpoken to them all. 2. They were all baptized. 3. They all believed in God. Whether here be any example of infant baptiſm, you will judge, each one for himſelf.

As ſome have ſuppoſed that this paſſage, and a few others of ſimilar import, afford an argument in favour of ſprinkling, it may be well to give it a moment's conſideration. Here we are told, that the keeper of the priſon brought out Paul and Silas. Where he brought them to, ſeems plainly enough to be gathered from the 32d verſe, in which we find them ſpeaking to the jailer the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his houſe. In the next verſe we are informed that the jailer and all his were baptized. Where they were baptized, we are not told. One thing however is plain, it was not in the houſe; for in verſe 34 it is ſaid, When (i. e. after the houſehold were baptized) he had brought them into his houſe, he ſet meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his houſe. From theſe obſervations, the following things appear:—

1. That Paul and Silas were in the jailer's houſe, when they ſpake the word of the Lord to all that were in his houſe. 2. That when the ordinance of baptiſm was adminiſtered, they were not in his houſe. 3. That the mode of baptizing then in uſe rendered it inconvenient to be performed in the jailer's houſe. 4. After the ordinance was adminiſtered, they went into the houſe. How this favours ſprinkling I ſee not.

The other ſuppoſed example is in 1 *Cor.* i. 16, where Paul ſays, I baptized alſo the houſehold of Stephanas. In the xvi. chap. 15th verſe, we have a ſhort hiſtory of Stephanas's houſehold; it is thus, "Ye know the houſehold of Stephanas, that it is the firſt fruits of Achaia, and that *they* have addicted themſelves to the miniſtry of the ſaints." Whether there is here found any evidence of infant baptiſm, you will determine for yourſelves.

6. Are the encouragements which are given to parents in behalf of their children, made to their having them baptized; or are the bleſſings connected with their dedicating them to the Lord, and with their bringing them up in his *nurture* and *admonition*? With which, your Bibles will inform you.

7. Do we, or do any, pretend, that there is any certain evidence, from either precept or example, for the baptizing of infants? Indeed there is none. Probably not many suppose it.

8. Is there, as some have affirmed, the same evidence for baptizing infants, that there is for observing the Lord's day, for admitting females to communion, and which there is for family prayer?

There is a day called the Lord's day, and religious things were to be observed on it. Are there infants, who are called baptized infants, and are they to be attended to as such?

Females and males are declared to be all one in Christ, and so fit subjects for the communion of saints. Are infants unequivocally declared to be fit subjects of baptism?

We have examples of family prayer, and are commanded to pray with all prayer. Are there scripture examples of infant baptism, and are we commanded to baptize all; and so are infants included?

9. Ought I to teach you infant baptism, if our Lord Jesus Christ hath no where directed me to do thus?

10. Hath Jesus Christ spoken one word of baptism, as being substituted for circumcision? Hath he any where commanded his ministers to teach this substitution?

Thirdly. Shall we go, and are we under the necessity of going, to the law and covenant of circumcision, to prove infant baptism, when both this law and covenant have long since waxed old, been repealed, and have perished? *Heb.* vii. 18, 19, and viii. 13.

But you will ask, Are not the blessings of Abraham come on the Gentiles? *Ans.* Yes. You will then say, Are not our children included in the promise? *Answer.* If they be Christ's, then are they Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. *Gal.* iii. 29. Abraham's children, after the flesh, were not included in the promise, as the Pedobaptists of our day would have theirs. But you will say again, Are not our children included in the covenant? In what covenant? In that of circumcision? Surely not. For though that covenant was often renewed, yet it hath long since passed away. Is your question this? Are they not included in that covenant, which was confirmed of God in Christ, twenty-four years previously to the covenant of circumcision? I answer, No man knoweth, nor can know, but as your children give evidence, that they possess the Spirit of

Christ. But as I have observed to you before, so I say again, even were your children included in this covenant, and saints; this does not of itself give them any right to baptism, any more, than Abraham's being included in the same covenant gave him a right to circumcision. This covenant determines nothing as to the one, or the other. The covenant of circumcision determined who were to be circumcised. So the ordinance or institution of Baptism, determines who are to be baptized. One determines no more who are to be admitted to the other, than does the covenant of an everlasting priesthood (*Numb.* xxv. 13.) determine who shall be ministers in gospel days. In short, there is no arguing from one to the other in this matter. They are both of them positive institutions, and nothing can be known of either, but what is revealed in its particular institution.

While viewing this subject you will inquire, What will become of our children? I answer, God only knoweth. You may rejoin; But what shall we do for them? *Ans.* Dedicate them to God, and, like faithful Christians, bring them up for him.

Fourthly. We will now attend to some legitimate consequences which follow, upon supposition that the subjects of baptism are to be determined from the subjects of circumcision.

1. One consequence is, every man who is converted to the Christian religion is to be baptized, and all his household, though he may have three hundred and seventeen training soldiers born in his own house. Not only are these soldiers to be baptized, but their wives, children, and all other servants, who belong to this great man's house. A thousand infidels are to be baptized, because one great man, their master, is christianized.

2. These soldiers, with their wives, children and servants, are all to be considered and treated as church members, or as being in covenant. I confess this does not look to me gospel-like.

3. Another consequence is, the adults among these, and among all others, who are baptized, are not only to be admitted to the communion, but required to come. I ask, could such a communion be called the communion of saints?—one great and good man, with hundreds of unconverted servants.

4. All who have been baptized, and have not, for misdemeanor, been expelled the church, have a right to baptism for their children: and no man may forbid them.

5. Another consequence is, notwithstanding Christ saith, My kingdom is not of this world; yet the regulations were such, especially the mean of admission into it, as strongly, and of infallible consequence, tended to make it of this world, and that abundantly so.

6. Another consequence is, many learned and pious ministers of New-England are inconsistent with themselves, in requiring of persons baptized in infancy a profession of experimental religion, as a term of communion. It was not so done in Israel.

7. Another consequence is, many of the same pious and learned ministers are very inconsistent with themselves, in refusing baptism to the children of such as are, by their baptism, in regular church membership, or in covenant, as it is termed.

I have taken, as you observe, for granted, what I do not believe to be true, that sprinkling, or a very partial washing, is baptism.

Lastly. Another consequence is, it doth, so far as it hath its *perfect work*, destroy the very idea of the gospel church, contradict the prophets, and make Paul, and others, speak not the truth, and it throws us back to the state of the Jewish church.

Jeremiah, prophesying of the gospel church, saith, chap. xxxi. 31 to 34, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with your fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law it their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.

If this means any thing, it certainly means that the gospel church shall exceed in purity the Jewish church; that it shall, at least, be composed of professing saints. *Isaiah*

ſays, chap. liv. 13, All thy children ſhall be taught of the Lord. The latter of theſe paſſages, our Lord applies to the goſpel day, *John* vi. 45: The former is applied to the goſpel church by Paul, *Heb.* viii.

Moſes ſays in Deut. xviii. 15, 19. The Lord thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet from the midſt of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye ſhall hearken. And it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever will not hearken unto my words, which he ſhall ſpeak in my name, I will require it of him.

This, and much more, Peter applies to goſpel days, and to the goſpel church, *Acts* iii. 22, to the end. Moſes truly ſaid unto the fathers, A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you. And it ſhall come to paſs that every ſoul that will not hear that Prophet, ſhall be *deſtroyed from among the people*. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that follow after, as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, And in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed. Unto you firſt, God, having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you in *turning* away *every one* of you *from his* iniquities.

Through the New-Teſtament, the goſpel church, is, or appears to be, ſpoken of as a ſociety, nation or church of ſaints; and as being greatly different from the nation of the Jews. But the ſubjects of baptiſm being determined by the ſubjects of circumciſion brings the goſpel church as to its conſtituent materials, to the ſame condition with the church under the law of carnal ordinances. Indeed, what is now, generally, called the goſpel church is hardly to be diſtinguiſhed by its members from the old Jewiſh church.

Do not theſe things look as though the twelve hundred and ſixty years of Antichriſt's reign were not wholly paſt? Is there not, my brethren, ſome defiling error at the root of all this? Can ſuch ſtreams, as are theſe conſequences, flow from a pure fountain? Indeed many good miniſters of our land have long ſince diſcovered ſome of theſe evil conſequences, and have laboured hard to rectify them. Preſident Edwards, and many others, made a noble ſtand againſt this flood of *corruption*; yet they diſcovered not the fountain,

whence these streams flow, and will flow, till it be removed. Putting or mistaking the covenant of circumcision, for the covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ to Abraham, twenty-four years before circumcision was known, and substituting baptism for circumcision, and determining the subjects of the one by the subjects of the other, without any authority thus to do, have produced all this corruption, deception, and world of evil. Would good ministers be persuaded to lay the axe at the root of the tree, as John did, the evils would be soon rectified.

The subject, on which we now are, is of such high concernment to the church of Christ, generally, and your conviction of the truth of it, being almost, or quite, essential to our future peace and union together, I would willingly omit nothing which might chase away your darkness, and cause the true light to appear. I will, therefore, add here the history of infant baptism. Should we find that infant baptism is of men, as we have already found sprinkling to be, it is hoped that you will either give it up, or practise it as being of man's device, and not, as Mr. Dickinson would have it, as belonging to infants by divine right.

The first information which we have of infant baptism is about the middle of the second century; about which time Irenæus, in one of his epistles, has the following sentence: "The church received a tradition from the apostles to administer baptism to little children or infants."*

The next account we have of this matter (if we except Tertullian, who opposed the practice) is given us by Origen, in about the middle of the third century. His words are, "Little children are baptized for the remission of sins." For the remission of original sin, or pollution, for of this is he speaking. Again he says, "The church had an *order* from the apostles to give baptism to infants."

Another part of the history of infant baptism we have in a quotation from the decisions of the famous council at Carthage, in the year 253. It is this: "From baptism and the grace of God *none* ought to be *prohibited*; especially infants *need our help* and the divine mercy." We have a farther account from Augustine, who flourished about the middle of the fourth century. His words (writing of infant baptism) are, "Let none, therefore, so much as *whisper* any

* Pref. Dickinson on Baptism.

other doctrine in *your ears:* this the church hath always had, has always held."

The next we hear of infant baptism is, that the practice was confirmed, and so put beyond dispute, by Pope Innocent the First.

Now fire and sword were the all-conclusive arguments used for the conviction and reformation of all who refused to practise, or dared to call in question, infant baptism. We will pass over the horrid persecutions, which now began to be, and have ever since been practised, at intervals, upon those who would not submit to the divine right of infants to baptism, as conferred on them by the ghostly Popes of Rome.

Luther, the famous German reformer, says, "that infant baptism was not determined till Pope Innocentius;" and Grotius, in his annotations on *Matth.* xix. says, "It was not enjoined till the Council of Carthage."*

We ought, however, to trace the history of infant baptism one step farther, and notice Calvin, and a multitude since, who were unwilling to acknowledge their dependence on the Mother of Harlots, for their authority in this matter; and therefore with great ingenuity have discovered infant baptism, as a gospel ordinance, or the right of infants to it, in the law of Moses. Indeed they have supposed that this doctrine is implied in a number of passages of the New-Testament. Yet, I believe, none who practise it, are willing to venture this New-Testament ordinance upon New-Testament evidence.

Here you see that *tradition* is the foundation of infant baptism; *error*, the belief that *baptism washes* away *original sin*, the nurse of its tender age; the church of Rome, the confirmer and strong defender of it; and the long since repealed, ceremonial law of Moses the evidence for it. You see, the introduction of infant baptism was tradition. Upon this foundation hath it manifestly rested ever since. All the ingenious arguments of learned and pious men, can, in fact, add no strength to its first foundation. The first we hear of it is, it was placed upon tradition, and there it hath rested, or been standing uneasily, ever since.

Besides, this *tradition*, as well as the practice which followed, is doubtless the offspring of error, and man's inven-

* Ancient Dialogue Revised.

tion. At beſt we have but one witneſs for it, in the mouth of whom nothing can be eſtabliſhed. Origen ſays, "The church had an *order* from the Apoſtles." Still we have but one witneſs. Moreover, the very expreſſions of the Pedobaptiſts ſhow that they were from the beginning oppoſed by the Baptiſts. Irenæus ſays, "We have a tradition." Origen ſays, "We have an order." The Council of Carthage ſay, "Infants ought not to be *prohibited* from baptiſm." Auguſtine ſaith, "Let none ſo much as whiſper any other doctrine in your ears."—Does not every ſyllable indicate the diſpute which the Baptiſts had with the inventers and ſupporters of this anti-evangelical principle and practice?

It is worthy of a moment's conſideration, that not one of the moſt ancient fathers makes the leaſt pretenſion that infant baptiſm is ſupported by ſo much as one paſſage in either the Old-Teſtament, or the New; and they mention no authority but *tradition*, and an *order* from the Apoſtles, &c. which, at beſt, are very uncertain things.

Whoever can fix their faith, continue their practice, and venture their reſponſibility, on ſuch a traditionary foundation, I cannot. Upon this foundation for our practice, have both we and our fathers ventured to oppoſe the Baptiſts, with greater or leſs degrees of virulence; whilſt, by our tradition, we have greatly injured the ordinance of Chriſt, if not, in this inſtance, made void the law of God.

In fine: Was not infant baptiſm firſt introduced to eſcape the offence of the croſs? Is it not, with many, unknowingly continued for the ſame end? It bringeth the church to its former ſtate as under the law. If I yet preach *circumciſion*, why do I yet ſuffer perſecution? Then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed, *Gal.* v. 11.

SERMON VII.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19, 20.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

I HAVE already ſet before you the principal part of what I intended under the two firſt propoſitions in my text. What remains is to bring forward—

III. Chriſt's command to all his miniſtering ſervants to teach all nations, or thoſe who ſhould be diſcipled among them, to obſerve all things whatſoever he had commanded them. And then—

Laſtly. His comforting and ſtrengthening promiſe, which is, And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

To theſe propoſitions, your ſerious, Chriſtian attention is requeſted. The firſt is—

III. Chriſt's command to the miniſters of his goſpel to teach all nations, or thoſe who ſhould be diſcipled among them, to obſerve all things whatſoever he had commanded them.

Here you ſee the extenſiveneſs of my orders received, and which I muſt carefully obſerve, would I be obedient unto the Heavenly Teacher, who came from God.

Chriſt Jeſus, when perſonally on earth, gave a new edition of his own and his Father's mind and will. In this new edition, he abrogated or left out, many ceremonies of the old, as being no longer uſeful. Under the old edition, the church was in its childhood, and therefore under ſuch tutors and governors as were not needed in her riper years. In this new edition, Chriſt hath pointed out what is to be preſerved of the old. The ſum of the moral law and the prophets, were to continue in force. Theſe are, indeed, in the very nature of things, binding on accountable creatures. But when Chriſt, the anointed and expected Meſſiah, was come, then all thoſe rites, ſacrifices and typical inſtitutions

of the ceremonial law, which were, together, as a ſchool-maſter to lead the obſerver to Chriſt, were diſannulled, being no longer of uſe.

You ſee what miniſters have authority to teach for both doctrine and practice. It is what Chriſt hath commanded them, and nothing which is contrary from it.

In time paſt I have taught you the precepts of Chriſt, ſomewhat largely. As I have taught them, ſo you have, as is believed, received them to the ſaving of your ſouls. The ordinance of the ſupper I have taught in its ſimplicity, and ſo have you received it. You have alſo been informed, that Jeſus Chriſt appointed baptiſm, as an ordinance to be obſerved in his church. But what that ordinance was, and who were the ſubjects of it, you have not been particularly told, till of late. Nor had I, till a ſhort time ſince, a clear underſtanding of either. I, no doubt, ought to have known them before; but till I did, I could not teach them to you. When I came to the knowledge of them, it was no longer in my power to be faithful to Chriſt, and refuſe to teach them. In the ſimplicity of my heart have I taught you what is baptiſm, and who are to be baptized.

Whether theſe things be, or be not, agreeable to my former notions of them, is nothing to the point. One thing I am ſettled in, I have, of late, taught them to you, as Chriſt hath commanded me.

Not only was it my duty to teach you theſe things, but I am commanded to teach you to obſerve them: for then are you Chriſt's diſciples, when you do all things whatſoever he hath commanded you.

To obſerve theſe things, is like obedient children to receive inſtruction, and then to ſearch the ſcriptures, that you may know how theſe things are. It belongs to me to teach you—

1. To obſerve theſe things till you underſtand them. And then—

2. To obſerve them in your practice.

1. Would you walk in all the ſtatutes and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs, you muſt obſerve theſe things till you underſtand them.

You and I have been unreaſonably prejudiced againſt light and truth in theſe matters. If I do not misjudge, the Lord hath, in anſwer to prayer, afforded me the needed light and knowledge upon the ſubject. It was not in a

day, nor in a month, after my prejudices received a ſhock, and my mind partial conviction, that I obtained ſatisfaction. Nor can I expect that you will, all of you, poſſeſs ſuch a ready mind, as to give up your long, and almoſt inveterate prejudices, and receive the light at once. It is by little and little, that antichriſtian errors muſt be deſtroyed from the church, and from your hearts, as well as from mine.

You may expect to find me ready, at any time, and at all times, to afford you every inſtruction, and to anſwer any objection which may occur to your candid minds. You ſhould have your Bibles always nigh you, and poſſeſs continually, a prayerful, teachable ſpirit. Be determined to hearken to none but Chriſt, and to be obedient to all his commands.

Be careful to avoid all bitterneſs and evil ſpeaking. Wiſdom will not dwell with ſtrife; nor will the wrath of man work the righteouſneſs of God.

2. It belongs to me to teach to obſerve the ordinance of baptiſm, and the proper ſubjects, in your practice. You muſt underſtand theſe things before you can acceptably practiſe them. Some of you, no doubt, ſufficiently underſtand them to proceed to practice. But I have not thought it duty to haſten your practice, or to lead you by example, leſt the minds of others ſhould be injured. It is a time to weaken prejudices, and not to increaſe them. Wiſdom dwells with prudence. Many of your minds, as well as mine, are, with pleaſing expectation, looking forward to the time, when we may, with nighly, or quite, all our brethren with us, keep all the ordinances of the goſpel, as Chriſt hath commanded us.

When you ſhall underſtand theſe things, happy will you be if you practiſe them; for all goſpel obedience gives pleaſure in the practice.

As Moſes had much to do in Egypt, before God ſaid unto him, 'Speak unto the people that they go forward,' ſo, my brethren, I may have much to do before things ſhall be in readineſs, and before the Lord ſhall bid me ſpeak, ſaying unto you, *Go forward*. But, if the Lord will, I would live to ſee that day.

After Iſrael went forward, and were baptized unto Moſes in the cloud, and in the ſea, they had a tedious wilderneſs to paſs; ſo it may be with us. But, ſhould we obſerve the pillar of cloud and of fire, we ſhall come to the promiſed

land; and it may be, with much safety and speed, should we hearken to the good counsel of Joshua.

You know, my brethren, as it is my duty to teach you to observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded me, so it is your duty to receive instruction, and be obedient. Your obedience is not to be rendered to me, but to Jesus Christ, and to the word of his testimony.

It will doubtless occur to your minds, Whom shall we hear? One minister teaches us one thing, and another teaches us differently. You are to hear no man any farther than he shall teach you as the man Christ Jesus hath commanded him. Ministers have no authority, any farther than they receive it from him. He hath given them no power to teach, but what He hath commanded. When they transcribe out of the old into the new edition of God's word and will, and tell us that the rite and covenant of circumcision are to explain to us the observance of a New-Testament ordinance, we are not obliged to believe them, unless they point us to the place where Christ hath so commanded. You are to obey them who have the rule over you. But even Paul was not to be followed any farther than he followed Christ. So it ought to be with you, in hearkening to what your teachers say. Ministers are but men, and they have proved themselves to be so, by changing the ordinance of baptism into quite a different thing, and by administering their new rite to subjects to whom Jesus Christ never commanded it. It surely is a surprising thing, and not to be accounted for, but from the relics of human depravity, that so many good men should, unknowingly, do and teach things which are quite aside from what Christ hath commanded them.

It is too late for you, my hearers, to cloak yourselves under what great and good men have said; for the truth of the Lord hath already been told you. Had I not come and spoken to you this word of Christ, you would not have had sin; but now have you no cloak for disobedience.

We now come—

Lastly, To consider Christ's comforting and strengthening promise to his ministering servants: which is, And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Christ Jesus hath been with his ministers: and he will be—

1. In preparing them for their office. He was personally with his first gospel heralds, for the space of three years, or more; after this he left them for a short space; in this short interval they passed a severe trial. He was with them again, at times, for forty days. Soon after this he sent his Spirit upon them, and filled them with it to a remarkable degree. Then they were prepared for their office. They speedily filled it remarkably, and the effect was wonderful. Three thousand were converted in a day.

Christ is as really, though not so apparently, with all his gospel messengers in preparing them to go forth into his harvest. Those, who have not Christ with them, to prepare them for their office, are but as wolves in sheep's clothing, when they go forth into the ministry. They preach for *filthy lucre*, and frequently have their *reward*. It is too often the case, that those, whom Christ hath prepared, are obliged to go into the field, or make tents for their support, whilst such as run, not being sent, swim in luxury.

2. Jesus Christ will be with his ministers in bringing divine things to their remembrance.

It is the Lord's Spirit which causeth divine truth to occur to the minds of his servants. Truths, which have been forgotten for months, and it may be for years, or passages which before were understood, may be, and not unfrequently are, fresh and plain in the minds of his servants, for their comfort, or for the comfort and instruction of others, or for the comfort and edification of both.

3. Christ will be with his ministers in affording them wisdom, fortitude and faithfulness.

The entrance of his word giveth light. He maketh light their paths, and ordereth all their steps. He maketh their feet like hinds' feet, and causeth them to be swifter than the eagle, stronger than lions, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. With what wisdom did Stephen speak! With what fortitude did Peter, Paul, and a thousands others, address their auditories! With what wisdom hath he made his servants to speak! With what fortitude to bear, with what faithfulness to endure, for his name's sake! How remarkably hath it been thus, in times of persecution! And when will you find a time, when they that are born after the flesh do not persecute those who are born after the Spirit! How often is it the case, when ministers, like Paul, wax bold, and testify that Jesus is the Christ, and what are his words and

institutions, that they are persecuted, openly or more secretly!

4. Christ is and will be with his ministering servants, whilst they are reproached and suffering for his name and truth sake.

He says to them all, If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. When Christ's ministers are reviled and suffer for his sake, his truth and Spirit bear their spirits up. He gives them to believe and know, that though they weep now, they shall soon rejoice; that their light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are preparing them for, and working out for them, a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.

5. Christ Jesus will be with his faithful ministers in giving them to see their desire upon his enemies.

This appears to be particularly implied in my text. They are commanded to go and disciple all nations. Their desire is to see disciples multiplied. They go forth, Christ goes forth with them. Many of Christ's enemies submit to his yoke, which is easy, and to his burden, which is light. In this are they gratified, and their desire on them is accomplished.

6. Christ is with his ministers in explaining and defending his truth.

How did Peter, Paul and others, in the first ages of Christianity, explain and vindicate the truth, to the confounding of both Jews and Gentiles! Whenever, in ages since, he hath spoken the word, great hath been the company, or force, of those who have published, explained and defended it. Martin Luther, John Calvin, and a number more in the reformation, were like flames of fire: nothing could stop them from publishing, explaining and defending the truths of the Saviour, for he was with them.

You will ask, How is it that Christ is with his ministers, when they contradict one the other, and themselves too? *Answer.* It is not said, that Christ is with his ministers in explaining and defending error. Error is human; truth is divine. When ministers undertake to support error, they go without Christ's blessing and presence in this their labour. Hence it is that they are so contradictory and inconsistent; and are obliged to wrest the scriptures from their plain and easy sense, to support a beloved prejudice. But when they take up for truth, plain scripture supports them,

and they have plain and pleasant work, and their subjects supported with ease, as you have seen whilst attending to the several truths in my text.

Besides, it may be the case, that some very good men may mix truth and error, the commands of God and their own traditions, together; and, whilst practising accordingly, they may enjoy a comfortable frame of mind, and hence conclude that their beloved compound is all from heaven. This may be illustrated by the following example. Mr. S. finds it to be a truth, that his infant offspring, as well as every thing else, should be devoutly given to God. He hath received and holds a tradition from the fathers, that his infants should be baptized. He publickly gives them to the Lord, and solemnly promises to instruct them in the way of truth and duty. He, at the same time, hath the ordinance of baptism administered to them, or administers it himself. During the whole transaction he possesses much comfort in his mind. His consequence is, the whole matter is according to truth, just as God would have it. Is not this going a little too much by sense, and not quite enough by scripture? Does it not contain a *spice* of enthusiasm? Would not the good man have had the same mental satisfaction, had he possessed the same spirituality, and yet had omitted that part which is enjoined by tradition only?

Lastly: The Great Captain of salvation is with his ministers, to teach, lead and comfort them, in all their trials, in all their straits. Whosoever will leave them, he will not. Though he, the Great High Priest of our profession, when suffering for his people's sins, was left alone—all forsook him; yet, whenever his friends are afflicted, he kindly calls, saying, Lo, I am with you. This hath been the stay of good men in all ages, in all circumstances. Those who have wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, who have been afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy, have found their refuge here. There is nothing like this to support the feeble, distressed soul. When godly ministers have been obliged to leave their people, yes, and their families, and sometimes their native country, for the truth's sake, this hath sustained them—Christ was with them. President Edwards, for a noble attempt at partial reformation, was constrained to flee his beloved charge: but Christ was, no doubt, with him. Should I, for laying the axe at the root of the tree, be obliged to leave you, though, for the

present, I see no particular reason to apprehend such an event, yet I trust this will be my hiding place——Jesus, who will be with me.

APPLICATION.

FROM what hath been said in the preceding discourses it appears—

1. That the two sides of the controversy between the Baptists and the Pedobaptists stand thus.

Before I state the two sides of the controversy, it is but reasonable that I define those whom it respects. By the Baptists, on one side, I mean the regular Calvinistic Baptists. By the Pedobaptists, on the other, I now intend the Calvinistic Congregationalists among them. I give this definition, that I may be clearly understood.

You see both sides are Calvinists, that is, they are agreed in what are styled the doctrines of grace. They are both of the congregational order, as it respects the government of the churches.

Now for the controversy, and it is this: The Baptists hold immersion only to be baptism. The Pedobaptists hold that sprinkling may be substituted for immersion, and may answer just as well.

The Baptists hold that the scriptures know nothing of a Christian ordinance of baptism for unbelievers and infidels. The Pedobaptists hold that, if a great man, who hath a thousand slaves, should become a disciple, then all his household are to be counted disciples, and are to be baptized.

The Baptists hold that the church of the New-Testament is composed of visible or professed saints. The consistent Pedobaptists hold, that this great man, his thousand slaves, together with his wife and children, all belong to the gospel church, though he only be a believer in Christ.

The Baptists hold that none have a right to partake of the Lord's Supper, but those who are his friends. The consistent Pedobaptists hold, that all the adults in this great man's household, if they be not guilty of gross immorality, have a right to come.

The Baptists plead New-Testament authority for the defence of their principles and practice, where they differ from their brethren of the Pedobaptists. The Pedobaptists in support of their sentiments plead convenience, and the cov-

enant and rite of circumcision, which were decaying, waxing old, and ready to vanish away, more than 1700 years ago.

The Baptists bring nighly threescore texts of scripture, which are plainly and fully to their point in favour of immersion. The Pedobaptists mention three or four texts, which, at most, are but very doubtfully in their favour; and, when rightly understood, appear fully against them.

What advantage, my brethren, have the Pedobaptists over the Baptists? And with what crime or error, in this matter, do they stand convicted?

2. It appears that gospel ministers have no authority to teach Christians, that their children and servants should be baptized, because Abraham's were circumcised.

Christ hath no where commanded them to teach thus. Christ hath no where commanded them to teach infant baptism at all, or baptism upon the faith of another; much less, that they are to be baptized because Abraham's were circumcised.

3. It appears, that many of the pious and learned clergy of New England have made some noble and promising advances towards truth in this matter; yet in this they are inconsistent with themselves.

They will receive none to the communion but such as profess faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as repentance for sin; and they will administer baptism to the children of no other. Here, in two instances, they refuse to follow the law of circumcision. One, in refusing to admit to the supper, impenitent, though civil, baptized persons; the other, in not admitting to baptism the children of all those who have been baptized. This is consistent with truth so far as it goes; but inconsistent with the notion that the subjects of baptism are to be determined from the subjects of circumcision.

These good men, so long as they possess their present light, must come over to the true Baptist ground, or submit to the imputation of inconsistency. I wish them to come over. For myself, I expect to, though my carnal nature hates the name of a Baptist, as much as theirs does. But my better judgment tells me, that the Baptists are on the gospel ground.

4. It is a matter of lamentation, that pious and learned ministers have not a little more self-denial: then they might be consistent with themselves and with truth too. Could I be with them, and ask them this plain question, Do you not

find a little backwardness from searching critically into the primitive meaning and practice of baptism? I fear they would answer with some reluctance.

To me, I confess, it appears an hard case, that the Baptists should suffer so much reproach, merely on account of their sentiments, when many of our best old divines have given them the ground, and confessed, that their sentiments, as to the mode, are from heaven, and ours from convenience. Our opposition to them, on account of the subjects, appears but little better, being but poorly supported by scripture: they having the plain word, and full current of all the prophets from Moses to Malachi, so far as they have spoken of the gospel church, together with the New-Testament, in *their* favour; whilst for us, in this particular, nothing better can be alleged than the antiquated rite of circumcision. If the Baptists be right, why not join them, and suffer small inconveniences? If wrong, why not prove them so? It is pitiful that great and good men should be dallying with inconclusive arguments, when the time is long since come, that the *highway* of holiness should be so *plain*, that *wayfaring men*, though fools, should not err therein.

5. We see why good men have been so divided among themselves, as to infant baptism.

The reason is, they go without Christ in this matter. He is not divided.

Some baptize all. Others will baptize only the children in the households of communicants. Some baptize upon the half-way covenant. Some will baptize all who are under age. Again, others will baptize all under seven. Others still will baptize upon the good promises of godfathers and godmothers. You will observe I use the word baptize in a sense which I believe to be improper, but I would not offend you with a word, when my meaning may be understood. But what propriety is there in all this inconsistency about the subjects of baptism? Does not the matter look as though there were no rule to go by, or as though none understood what it was!

6. We see why good men, when writing or speaking of baptism, are left to speak untruths.

It is doubtless because they will follow their own prejudices, and not the truth. Error hath divided them, and Christ is not with them in what they say. Some good men, not many, dare assert, in opposition to the Baptists, that

there is not a word about immerſion for baptiſm, in all the Bible. For *laymen* to ſay thus, is *preſumption*, and for men of *learning* to make the aſſertion, is *almoſt unpardonable*. For they know, or ought to know, that the word, to baptize, is not once mentioned in all the Bible but immerſion is mentioned, unleſs they mean to play upon the word; and then it is a truth, when *baptizō* is mentioned, immerſion is, if they will give it its plain, literal Engliſh.

If the Baptiſts have the plain, literal and unequivocal ſenſe of the ſcripture in their favour, is it not enough that they are deſpiſed and perſecuted by the wicked of every claſs and not helped by any; but muſt we add to their affliction, by falſehood or equivocation? O prejudice, what will thou not do, even in a ſaint!

Beſides, our good brethren, who are ſo warm againſt the Baptiſts, and will not allow them a word for their mode, do not agree together to inform us what the mode ſhould be. One tells us, it is ſprinkling, another ſays, pouring is the mode, a third contends for waſhing the face, a fourth is for putting water on the back of the neck, as the Swiſs are ſaid to do; whilſt others affirm, that all theſe are right. Now, ſuppoſe the Baptiſts are wrong, who ſhall we ſay are in the right, or is there no right in this buſineſs? Does not all this look juſt as it would were there an error at the bottom? Hath the Great Teacher, who came from God, left matters thus at looſe ends? Does the Bible thus differ, whilſt pointing out the mode? No. Its language is pure and determinate.

7. It appears, that, in infant ſprinkling for baptiſm, the intent of the inſtitution is loſt, and becomes no Chriſtian ordinance at all.

Both the thing itſelf and the ſubjects of it are changed. It is quite a different thing from what the Inſtitutor hath appointed. Neither this mode nor theſe ſubjects are known in the inſtitution, nor in any paſſage of the Bible, where baptiſm is mentioned. This mode is of man's device, and the ſubjects of it have, at beſt, but a traditional right. For good men to do thus, whilſt they think it conſiſtent with truth, appears to be a ſin of ignorance; but if any do thus, while they know what the ſcriptures enjoin, their practice deſerves a harder name.

8. It appears that dipping, immerſion, or burying in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, is baptiſm.

No man of real piety and solid learning, ever doubted it. Whereas, sprinkling hath been doubted by many, denied, continually, by a large class of Christians, and been proved by none to have been ever appointed as the Christian ordinance of baptism.

9. We see, that every plea which hath been made, for a general or partial neglect of the scripture mode of baptism, is an indirect, though unintentional, charge of negligence, or want of benevolence, or of foresight, in the Divine Institutor. Let every man of candour and common sense examine this matter. Did not the Lord, who made our northern climes, know how cold they are?—Did he know them to be too cold for his disciples who might live in them, to be separated from the world by being visibly buried and raised again to join his kingdom? Why then did he not mention an exception in our favour, and not leave us to suffer this inconvenience, or be in perpetual uncertainty and continual dispute, to defend our, at best, but doubtful practice? Did he not perfectly know all the *compelling necessities* which Cyprian and others would, in their erring judgments, find to break over the bounds of the baptismal institution? Why then did he make no provision for these extreme cases? By doing this, he would have saved the Pedobaptists a world of anxiety, contention and censure. The fact appears to be, that our Lord intended, that the way of admission into his kingdom should be uniform, and that those who would not submit to it, should suffer the inconvenience of darkness, error and strife.

10. From what hath been said in the preceding discourses, is not the following a fair and undeniable conclusion? That I and other Pedobaptist ministers, so far as we have spoken a word against the Baptists, and especially that those, who have publickly warned their people to avoid the Baptists and flee from them, as from a dividing and dangerous heresy, have in this matter acted the part of the old Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites—who would not go into the kingdom of God themselves, and those who were entering, they hindered.

I by no means suppose that all who have done thus, are indeed hypocrites, save in this particular. No reasonable doubt can be entertained, but many of them are learned, pious, and very useful men; men, whom the Lord hath greatly honoured as labourers, in gathering in the harvest

of souls. Many of these have been, in measure, bold, zealous and faithful, like Peter; yet when they dissemble, or teach and practise contrary from the truth, they are to be blamed; yes, they are, in this instance, worthy to be rebuked.

It would, indeed, be very injudicious in me to contend, that all which the Baptists have said and done is justifiable. It would be equally injudicious to justify myself, or my brethren, where we have both said and done things contrary from the church and name of Jesus of Nazareth. It is time for both ministers and people to look to this matter, lest the Lord send leanness into our souls.

11. From a review of the whole subject, the following inference appears natural, and at the same time worthy of much consideration. The divinely constituted method by which any of the fallen race are to enter the kingdom of heaven below, remarkably sets to our view the way by which we are to commence perfect members of the kingdom of heaven above. Our obedience to the former is a practical declaration of our faith in the latter.

In joining Christ's kingdom on earth, we professedly die unto sin, go down to the grave, are buried, and rise, as from the dead. To join the kingdom of glory, we must actually experience what is but shadowed forth in baptism. We must die, be buried, or return to the dust, and rise from the dead.

How exactly doth our entrance into the church militant shadow forth our hoped for entrance into the church triumphant! It also appears that Christ hath directed, that the subjects of the one should be professedly, what the subjects of the other shall be actually, all saints.

How beautiful doth the church appear, so far as she observes the commands of her Lord, as to the members which she admits, and the manner of receiving them! She thus resembles Jerusalem, which is above, which is the mother of us all, if we be Christians. May the Lord direct our hearts into the love of the truth.

In the conclusion of the whole, it becomes us to add, to the truths delivered, what Christ Jesus added to my text: AMEN.

END OF THE SERMONS.

A MINIATURE HISTORY

OF THE

BAPTISTS.

IT may be pleaſing to ſome of my readers to be preſented with a brief account of the Baptiſts. I ſhall extract this account from the writings of thoſe who were not of the Baptiſt denomination, but rather prejudiced againſt them.

Here it may be obſerved, that the religious ſect, called Baptiſts, have cauſed the learned world more perplexity and reſearch to decypher their origin, than any other ſect of Chriſtians, or, perhaps, than all others. Yes, this reſearch hath baffled all their erudition in ancient ſtory.

It is not difficult to fix the period when one ſect of this denomination was firſt called Petrobruſians, when another was known by the name of Waterlandians, when a third was denominated Mennonites, &c. But the difficulty is this, to aſcertain the time, place and medium, by which Chriſt's diſciples were led to adopt the peculiar ſentiment, which is now held by thoſe called Baptiſts, and which diſtinguiſhes them from all other denominations.

It may be farther obſerved, that if no one, however learned and wiſe, be able to trace this ſect to any beginning ſhort of the days of the apoſtles, or of Chriſt, it is poſſible that it then aroſe. Beſides, if all other religious denominations, or the Pedobaptiſts, who include all which are not Baptiſts, can be traced to a probable origin ſhort of the apoſtles, and the Baptiſts cannot be, it affords ſtill more probability, that they might have ariſen then.

I wiſh my readers to indulge me one queſtion, and to give me an explicit anſwer. Are you willing to have the origin of the Baptiſts fairly explored, and to open your eyes to the light, ſhould light be afforded?

You cannot, my Chriſtian readers, unleſs your minds be unduly ſwayed by prejudice, do otherwiſe than ſay, Yes. For, though you be not very friendly to the Baptiſts, you will not deny them what you grant to your worſt enemy,

liberty to ſpeak the truth, and that truth its weight, at leaſt in meaſure.

It ought to be particularly noted, that my object is not to give the hiſtory of a name, but of a principle. I ſhall not contend who were firſt called Baptiſts, Anabaptiſts, Mennonites, or the like; but who have held the peculiar ſentiment which is adopted by thoſe who are called Baptiſts. Wherever we find this principle, there we find the men, the Chriſtians, who, had they lived in our day, would be ſtyled Baptiſts. Nor is the preſent controverſy this, Whence came that *mode* of baptiſm, which is practiſed by all, who are known by the name Baptiſts? For this mode is granted, generally, if not univerſally, by all learned and honeſt men, to be as ancient as John the Baptiſt and the apoſtles. This mode is, indeed, not peculiar to the Baptiſts, for the Pedobaptiſts, for many centuries, practiſed this mode; and many of them do, to this day, practiſe immerſion.

The peculiar characteriſtic of the Baptiſts is this: They hold, that the ordinance of baptiſm is to be adminiſtered to adults, or to viſible believers only.

One natural conſequence of this principle is, when any one who was baptized, or ſprinkled, in his infancy, comes over to the Baptiſts' ſentiment, they require him to be baptized. Hence they are called Anabaptiſts. Another very natural conſequence is, this ſentiment conſtrains the Baptiſts to oppoſe the baptiſm of infants. Hence they are diſtinguiſhed by the name of Antipedobaptiſts.

I ſhall add one obſervation more, and then proceed to give you a ſuccinct hiſtory of the Baptiſts. The obſervation is this: Whenever and wherever I find perſons, who hold the peculiar, characteriſtic, ſentiment of the Baptiſts, I ſhall call them by that name. Their hiſtory now follows.

I. The origin of the Baptiſts can be found no where, unleſs it be conceded that it was at Jordan, or Enon.

Dr. Moſheim, in his hiſtory of the Baptiſts, ſays, "The *true origin* of that ſect, which acquired the denomination of the Anabaptiſts by their adminiſtering anew the rite of baptiſm to thoſe who come over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonites from the famous man to whom they owe the greateſt part of their preſent felicity, is *hid* in the *remote depths* of *antiquity*, and is of conſequence extremely difficult to be aſcertained."

Here, Dr. Mosheim, as learned an historian, though not so candid a one, as the science of letters can boast, bears positive testimony, that the origin of the Baptists is hidden in the *remote depths* of *antiquity*. Nothing is more evident than this; the Doctor either knew not their origin, or was not candid enough to confess it. At least, we have this conclusion, that he could find their origin no where short of the apostles.

II. A large number of the Baptists were scattered, oppressed, and persecuted, through many, if not through all, the nations of Europe, before the dawn of the reformation under Luther and Calvin. When Luther, seconded by several princes of the petty states of Germany, arose in opposition to the overgrown usurpations of the church of Rome, the Baptists also arose from their hiding places. They hoped that what they had been long expecting and praying for was now at the door; the time in which the sufferings of God's people should be greatly terminated: but God had not raised Luther's views of reformation to nigh the height the Baptists were expecting. Their detestation of the Mother of Harlots, owing to their bitter experience of her cruelties, and the clear gospel light with which they had been favoured above Luther, and their ardent desire to be utterly delivered from her cruel oppressions, made them wish to carry the reformation farther than God had appointed Luther to accomplish. They were soon disappointed in Luther, and probably did not duly appreciate the reformation which he was instrumentally effecting. It was as might have been expected; the Lutherans and the Baptists fell out by the way; and Calvin, if not Luther, warmly opposed them. *See Mosheim, Cent.* XVI. *Chap.* iii. *Sect.* 3. *Part* 2.

Mosheim, vol. IV. page 427, speaking of the Baptists, says, "This sect started up all of a sudden, in several countries, at the same point of time, and at the very period when the first contests of the reformers with the Roman Pontiffs drew the attention of the world." From this we have one plain and fair deduction; that the Baptists were before the reformation under Luther and Calvin, and therefore did not take their rise from the Enthusiasts under Munzer and Storck, or at that time; or at Munster.

III. The Hussites, in the fifteenth century, the Wickliffites, in the fourteenth, and the Petrobrusians, in the

twelfth, and the Waldenſes, were all Baptiſts.* To this fact Dr. Moſheim bears the following teſtimony.† "It may be obſerved that the Mennonites (i. e. the Baptiſts of Eaſt and Weſt Frieſland, Holland, Gelderland, Brabant, Weſtphalia and other places in the North of Europe) are *not entirely miſtaken*, when they boaſt their deſcent from the Waldenſes, Petrobruſians and other *ancient* ſects, who are uſually conſidered as *witneſſes* of the *truth* in times of univerſal darkneſs and ſuperſtition. Before the riſe of Luther and Calvin, there lay *concealed* in *almoſt all* the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, many perſons, who adhered tenaciouſly to the following doctrine, which the Waldenſes, Wickliffites and Huſſites had maintained; ſome in a more diſguiſed and others in a more open and public manner, viz. *That the kingdom of Chriſt, or the viſible church he had eſtabliſhed upon earth, was an aſſembly of true and real ſaints, and ought therefore to be inacceſſible to the wicked and unrighteous, and alſo exempt from all thoſe inſtitutions which human prudence ſuggeſts to oppoſe the progreſs of iniquity, or to correct and reform tranſgreſſors.* This maxim is the true ſource of all the peculiarities, that are to be found in the religious doctrine and diſcipline of the Mennonites, (or Baptiſts in the North of Europe) and it is moſt certain that the *greateſt part* of theſe *peculiarities* were approved of by many of thoſe who, before the dawn of the reformation, entertained the notion already mentioned relating to the viſible church of Chriſt."

From this teſtimony of Dr. Moſheim we may remark—

1. That the Mennonites were Baptiſts, or Anabaptiſts, for theſe different names he uſes to expreſs one and the ſame thing.

2. That the Petrobruſians were Baptiſts; for the Baptiſts aſſert, and Moſheim allows it, that they were their progenitors in principle and practice. Beſides, in his hiſtory of the twelfth century, part II. chap. v. ſect. 7, he expreſsly tells us, that one of their tenets was, *that no perſons whatſoever were to be baptized before they were come to the full uſe of their reaſon.*

3. That the Waldenſes, Wickliffites and Huſſites were Baptiſts; for, as Moſheim ſays, they all held to the great

* Not all, every one; but all, generally.

† *Vol.* IV. pp. 428, 429.

and leading maxim, which is the true source of all the peculiarities that are to be found in the religious doctrine and discipline of the Mennonites. These several denominations of Christians were not known by the ancient, modern and appropriate name, Baptists. But their doctrine and discipline wre the same with our Baptists, and were they now living, they would be thus called. In other words; just so far as they were consistent with their great and leading *maxim*, and just so far as the modern Baptists are consistent with *their* great and leading maxim, just so far these ancient and modern Baptists are alike the one to the other.

4. That in the sixteenth century the Waldenses, Petrobrusians and other ancient sects (i. e. of the Baptists) were usually considered as having been witnesses of the truth, in the times of darkness and universal superstition. How differently from this would and do many consider them in our day!

5. That before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, many persons who held the same doctrine and discipline with the Baptists in our day, and were, of necessary and fair consequence, of the same denomination.

IV. We have already traced the Baptists down to the twelfth century. We have also found that they were scattered over almost all the countries of Europe, and were, in the dark ages of popery, the witnesses of the truth; or have been usually thus considered. Besides, we have found that the Waldenses were, in principle and practice, Baptists; or in other words, we have found that the Waldenses were Baptists. We will now see to what origin we can trace the Waldenses.

Dr. Maclaine, who translated Mosheim's church history from the original Latin, gives us, vol. III. pages 118, 119, under note, G, the following history of the Waldenses. His words are, "We may venture to affirm the contrary (i. e. from what Mosheim had just said of the Waldenses taking their name from Peter Waldus) with Beza and other writers of note; for it seems evident, from the best records, that Valdus derived his name from the true Valdenses of Piedmont, whose doctrine he adopted, and who were known by the name of Vaudois and Valdenses, before he, or his immediate followers, existed. If the Valdenses, or Wal-

denſes, had derived their name from any eminent teacher, it would probably have been from Valdo, who was remarkable for the purity of his doctrine, in the ninth century, and was the cotemporary and chief counſellor of Berengarius. But the truth is, that they derive their name from their vallies in Piedmont, which in their language are called Vaux. Hence Vaudois, their true name; Hence Peter, (or, as others call him, John) of Lyons, was called in Latin Valdus, becauſe he had adopted their doctrine; and hence the term Valdenſes and Waldenſes, uſed by thoſe who write in Engliſh, or Latin, in the place of Vaudois. The bloody Inquiſitor Reinerus Sacco, who exerted ſuch a furious zeal for the deſtruction of the Waldenſes, lived but about eighty years after Valdus of Lyons, and muſt therefore be ſuppoſed to know whether or not he was the real founder of the Valdenſes, or Leoniſts; and yet it is remarkable, that he ſpeaks of the Leoniſts as a ſect that had flouriſhed about five hundred years; 'nay, mentions authors of note, who make their antiquity remount to the apoſtolic age. *See the account given of Sacco's book by the Jeſuit Gretſer in the* Bibliotheca Patrum. I know not upon what principle Dr. Moſheim maintains that the inhabitants of the vallies of Piedmont are to be carefully diſtinguiſhed from the Waldenſes; and I am perſuaded that whoever will be at the pains to read attentively the 22d, 25th, 26th, and 27th chapters of the firſt book of Leger's Hiſtoire des Egliſes Vaudoiſes, will find this diſtinction entirely groundleſs.—When the Papiſts aſk us where our religion was before Luther, we generally anſwer, in the Bible, and we anſwer well. But to gratify their taſte for tradition, and human authority, we may add to this anſwer—and in the vallies of Piedmont.

To the above we may add, one of the Popiſh writers, ſpeaking of the Waldenſes, ſays, "*The hereſy of the Waldenſes is the oldeſt hereſy in the world.*"*

It is here worthy to be particularly noticed—

1. That Reinerus Sacco ſpeaks of the Waldenſes, or Baptiſts, of his day, as a ſect that had, at that time, flouriſhed for about five hundred years; which brings the hiſtory of the Baptiſts, as a religious ſect, down to the fifth century.

2. That this ſame Reinerus Sacco mentions authors of note, who make the antiquity of the Waldenſean Baptiſts to remount to the apoſtolic age.

* Preſident Edwards's Hiſt. of Redemption, p. 267.

3. That the Baptists are the most ancient of all the religious sects, who have set themselves to oppose the ghostly powers of the Romanists.

4. That, if there be any body of Christians, who have existed during the reign of antichrist, or of the man of sin, the Baptists have been this living church of Jesus Christ.

5. The consequence of the whole is this: The Baptists have no origin short of the Apostles. They arose in the days of John the Baptist, and increased largely in the days of our blessed Saviour, when he showed himself unto Israel, and in the days of his Apostles, and have existed, under the severest oppressions, with intervals of prosperity, ever since.

But as to the Pedobaptists, their origin is at once traced to about the middle of the second century; when the mystery of iniquity not only began to work, but, by its fermentation, had produced this error of fruitful evils, namely, that baptism was essential to salvation; yes, that it was regeneration. Hence arose the necessity of baptizing children. Now comes forward Irenæus, and informs that the church had a *tradition* from the Apostles to give baptism to infants. We are told in the Appendix to Mosheim's Church History, that one of the remarkable things which took place in the second century was the baptizing of infants, it being never known before, as a Christian ordinance for them.

What a pity it is, that good men, who have renounced the error, which was, as church history informs us, the progenitor of infant baptism, should still retain its practical and erroneous offspring, to the prejudice and marring of the church of God! Not a single sect of the Pedobaptists can find its origin nearer to the Apostles than the second century. We hence conclude, that their origin was there, and that they then and there arose in the mystery which was then working. May the Father of lights open the eyes of my brethren, that they may come out of this, perhaps, the last thicket of gross error and darkness.

I will now add—

V. The testimony which President Edwards bears in favour of the Waldenses and other faithful ones, who were scattered through all parts of Europe in the dark ages of Popery. It is the following:

"In every age of this dark time, there appeared particular persons in all parts of Christendom, who bore a testimony against the corruptions and tyranny of the church of

Rome. There is no one age of antichriſt, even in the darkeſt time of all, but eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians mention a great many by name, who manifeſted an abhorrence of the Pope and his idolatrous worſhip, and plead for the ancient purity of doctrine and worſhip. God was pleaſed to maintain an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of witneſſes, through the whole time, in Germany, France, Britain, and other countries, as hiſtorians demonſtrate, and mention them by name, and give an account of the teſtimony which they held. Many of them were private perſons, and many of them miniſters, and ſome magiſtrates and perſons of great diſtinction. And there were numbers in every age, who were perſecuted and put to death for this teſtimony.

"Beſides theſe particular perſons, diſperſed here and there, there was a certain people, called the Waldenſes, who lived ſeparate from all the reſt of the world, who kept themſelves pure, and conſtantly bore a teſtimony againſt the church of Rome, through all this dark time. The place where they dwelt was the Vaudois, or the five vallies of Piedmont, a very mountainous country, between Italy and France. The place where they lived was compaſſed with thoſe exceeding high mountains, called the Alps, which were almoſt impaſſable. The paſſage over theſe mountainous, deſert countries, was ſo difficult, that the vallies where this people dwelt were almoſt inacceſſible. There this people lived for many ages, as it were alone, where, in a ſtate of ſeparation from all the world, having very little to do with any other people, they ſerved God in the ancient purity of his worſhip, and never ſubmitted to the church of Rome. This place, in this deſert, mountainous country, probably was the place, eſpecially meant in the xii. chap. of Revelation, 6 verſe, as the place prepared of God for the woman, that they ſhould feed her there during the reign of Antichriſt.

"Some of the Popiſh writers themſelves own that that people never ſubmitted to the church of Rome. One of the Popiſh writers, ſpeaking of the Waldenſes, ſays, the hereſy of the Waldenſes is the oldeſt hereſy in the world. It is ſuppoſed, that this people firſt betook themſelves to this deſert, ſecret place among the mountains to hide themſelves from the ſeverity of the heathen perſecutions, which were before Conſtantine the Great, and thus the woman fled into the wilderneſs from the face of the ſerpent, *Rev.* xii. 6; and ſo verſe 14, And to the woman were given two wings

of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness into her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the face of the serpent. And the people being settled there, their posterity continued there from age to age afterwards, and being as it were by natural walls, as well as by God's grace, separated from the rest of the world, never partook of the overflowing corruption."

It is hoped that the reader will very carefully and candidly compare what is testified to us by three very learned men, Dr. Mosheim, Dr. Maclaine, and President Edwards. The testimony of the first is, that the Waldenses and many others who are *usually considered as witnesses of the truth* in the times of *universal darkness* and *superstition*, were essentially agreed with the Baptists of modern date, as to *principle* and *practice*, or as to the great maxim, whence flow all the peculiarities of that denomination. His testimony, in short, is this; the Hussites, the Wickliffites, the Petrobrusians and the Waldenses, with other witnesses of the truth, scattered over Europe, in the dark ages of Popery, were essentially the same with the Baptists of later times; or that they all were what we call Baptists.

Dr. Maclaine testifies that the Waldenses flourished as early as the fifth century; yes, he informs us that some authors of note carry their antiquity up to the apostolic age.

President Edwards informs us that these Waldenses were the main body of the church in the dark ages, and have been, together with their scattered brethren, the pure church of Jesus Christ, during the reign of Antichrist, and, of certain consequence, were successors of the pure church, from the days of Christ and his apostles.

The fair consequence of all is this, that the Baptists have been the uninterrupted church of our Lord from the apostles' day to ours.

I may, indeed, exclaim, What have I been believing, what have I been doing, with respect to the Baptists, all my days?

I know, and I confess, that the history of the church assures me, that the denomination of Christians to which I have belonged, and to which I do still visibly belong, came through the church of Rome, and was broken off from the mother of harlots, and it is not greatly to be wondered at, if all her filth should not be yet wiped away. At the same time, the same history assures me, that the Baptists

never have submitted to her superstitions and filthy abominations.

I am somewhat surprized at my own long continued ignorance, and at the yet remaining darkness of my brethren, as to this matter. But above all, what shall I say, at the hard opposition which some good men yet maintain against their brethren, the Baptists? Surely, they might with great propriety be addressed in the words of Gamaliel: "Take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do, as touching these men." If ye will not favour them, "refrain from them, and let them alone; for if their counsel or work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

All the power, craft and cruelty of the wicked, though practised for nighly one thousand eight hundred years, have not been able to prevail against them. Surely the misguided zeal of good men will not.

In this short History of the Baptists, we see the continued accomplishment of one of Christ's promissory predictions, which is, *Matt.* xvi. 18. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church. That denomination of Christians which are called Baptists, are the only known society of professing Christians, against which Satan hath not prevailed, either in point of doctrine, or discipline, or both. This church, or old and inveterate heresy, as Satan would call it, he acknowledges, by the mouth of his servants, the Romanists, that he could never subdue. It is true, Satan hath joined many of his legions to it, as he did many false brethren to the disciples in the days of the apostles. But he hath never, no, not for an hour, prevailed upon this ancient and primitive church to give up the doctrines of grace, or the administrations of the ordinances as Christ delivered them to his people. That which she first received, she still holds fast, and will. In all the history of the church, we read of no other body of professing Christians, after which Satan hath cast such a continual flood of waters; but hitherto the earth hath helped the woman, and the flood of persecution hath not prevailed. Satan's future efforts will be equally without effect.

My Fathers and Brethren in the ministry, and my brethren among the professed disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, suffer a word of exhortation.

If you will not take up the croſs, and ſo increaſe the number of Chriſt's continually preſerved, yet always ſuffering, little flock, be ye careful how ye ſet yourſelves in array againſt them. For more are they who are for them, than are thoſe who are againſt them. With you is an arm of fleſh, in all your oppoſitions, but with them is the Lord their God to help them, and he will help them; and by and by he will help them right early.

I ſhall be very pleaſingly diſappointed, ſhould I not be, by many of you who are rulers in Iſrael, ſet at nought, for coming over to the help of the Lord againſt the mighty. But, if I may but know the truth, and pleaſe the Lord, it is, with me, but a comparatively ſmall thing to be judged of you, or of man's judgment. I do, indeed, wiſh for the continuance of your good opinion and friendſhip, but I cannot poſſeſs them at the expenſe of truth. That I might teſtify unto you theſe things, I have riſked every thing which the world calls valuable. I am now determined, and through the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt I hope that to the end of my life I ſhall be determined, to venture every thing in defence of the doctrines and ordinances and church of the Son of God. I beſeech all of you, who know the grace of our Lord Jeſus, that ye do not as did many of the chief rulers in Iſrael. They believed on Chriſt, but did not confeſs him, becauſe of the Phariſees, leſt they ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue; for they loved the praiſe of men, more than the praiſe of God. *John* xii. 42, 43.

You have now heard me, and know what I do. You will therefore now make up your judgment. But I pray you, remember one thing: With what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged.

I am, Reader,

Thy Servant, for the Goſpel's ſake,

DANIEL MERRILL.

Extract from the Baptist Missionary Magazine, No. 4.

Account of the Baptist Church lately constituted at Sedgwick, District of Maine.

THE Rev. Daniel Merrill graduated at Dartmouth College, 1789, was ordained over the Congregational Church in Sedgwick, in September, 1793. His labours have been very much blessed among his people, who have experienced several precious seasons of revival under his ministry, particularly in the years 1798, and 1801.

Several circumstances occurred to lead Mr. Merrill, in the course of the last year, to review, with more critical attention, the grounds on which he had practised *infant baptism*. The result of his inquiries may be learned from the preceding Sermons on baptism, and from the following account of his baptism, &c.

At a meeting of the church (or covenanted brethren) Feb. 28, 1805, they voted unanimously to send for a council of Baptist ministers to come and assist them in the following particulars, viz. 1st. To administer Christian baptism to them; 2d. To constitute them into a church upon the primitive Baptist platform; 3d. To set over them in the Lord, the Rev. Daniel Merrill, to be their minister.

Agreeably to their request, Messrs. Pitman of Providence, Baldwin of Boston, and Williams of Beverly, accompanied by a number of brethren, took passage at Salem, at 8 o'clock on Thursday evening the 9th day of May, instant, and arrived at Sedgwick the Saturday following, at one, P. M. Lord's-day, half past 10 o'clock, Mr. Pitman preached from Acts v. 20. After an intermission of half an hour, Mr. Baldwin preached from 1 Cor. iii. 9. After another intermission of a few minutes, Mr. Williams addressed the people again from Prov. xxv. 25. At 6, Mr. Baldwin preached again, from Sol. Song, i. 8.

Monday, May 12, at 2, P. M. the council formed, and then adjourned until the next day. At 3, assembled in the meeting-house, and Mr. Williams preached from John xiv. 21. After which proceeded to an examination of the candidates for baptism, until the day was spent.

Tuesday, 13th, examined a number more candidates. At half past 10, Mr. Williams preached particularly on the institution, from Acts ii. 41. Immediately after, we repair-

REASONS

FOR

SEPARATING

FROM THE

GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER.

BY ALEXANDER CARSON, A. M.

Tubermore, Ireland.

SECOND EDITION.

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. *Isaiah* viii. 20.

Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. *Ezek.* xliii. 10, 11.

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PREFACE.

EVERY Chriſtian is a member of two kingdoms perfectly diſtinct, but perfectly compatible in their intereſts. In each of theſe, he has peculiar duties, in the diſcharge of which he is to purſue a very different conduct. As a ſubject of civil government, he is called to unreſerved, unequivocal obedience. without waiting to inquire into its nature and quality, or even the legitimacy of the title of thoſe in power. If he underſtands his Bible, he knows that "the powers that be, are ordained of God," and that he muſt "ſubmit to every ordinance of man, not merely for wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake." In Britain he will ſubmit to monarchy; in America to a republic; and in France he will obey, without puzzling himſelf in determining whether Buonaparte is a legal governor, or a uſurper. But it is not ſo in the kingdom of Chriſt. Here it is his duty in every thing to judge for himſelf, and in no inſtance to be the diſciple of man. He is commanded to examine, not blindly adopt the dogmas of his ſpiritual guides. He is no where required to conform and ſubmit to that form of church government, under which he has been educated. or to which he may at any time have thought it his duty to attach himſelf. He is enjoined to "prove all things. and to hold faſt *only* that which is true." He is Chriſt's freedman and ſhould not ſuffer himſelf to become the ſervant of man, nor to be fettered by human ſyſtems.

Convinced that this is both the duty and privilege of every Chriſtian, I have largely and leiſurely examined the *original nature*, and *preſent ſtate* of that church * in

* I am obliged ſometimes in this pamphlet to uſe the word church in this common acceptation, though not ſo uſed in any part of the New Teſtament.

which I was educated, and in which I have for ſome years acted as a miniſter. I have examined, and am convinced, that both in *plan* and *adminiſtration*, it is contrary to the word of God. It muſt appear to every man of candour, that I could have no intereſt in deciding as I have done. Every intereſt of a worldly nature was ſurely on the other ſide. The day I gave up my connexion with the general ſynod, I gave up all that the world eſteems. I ſacrifice not only my proſpects in life, and my reſpectability in the world, but every ſettled way of ſupport. It is uſual for men to deſert a church under perſecution; I have deſerted one in the tide of her proſperity, or as ſome of her friends ſpeak, in her "*meridian glory*." If people never begin to think any thing amiſs in their religion till they are perſecuted for it, or till ſuperior honours and advantages are held out to view, they have reaſon to ſuſpect their judgments. But when wealth and reſpectability in ſociety are in the gift of the church, when one of her members ſits in judgment upon her, ſhe is likely to get a fair trial. A man is not apt, upon ſlight grounds, to reaſon himſelf out of his living, his friends, and his reputation. It will not be out of whim he will exchange eaſe for labour, reſpect for calumny, preſent competency for the naked promiſe of God. Notwithſtanding this, I am perfectly aware that the worſt motives and deſigns will be attributed to me. I would indeed know little of human nature, and leſs of the Bible, if I did not expect the reproaches of the world. If they have called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, much more thoſe of his houſehold.—He himſelf experienced ſuch treatment from the world, and he knows how to ſuccour his children in like circumſtances.

The divine right of the preſbyterian form of church government, it may be expected, will now become the *preſent truth* among all ſects of preſbyterians in this country. Their inveterate rage againſt each other, will for a time be ſuſpended, that they may unite againſt the common enemy. Every pulpit will reſound with the cry of innovation; many an affecting repreſentation will be given of the ſufferings of our worthy forefathers, in

erecting the *venerable fabrick*. I would caution Chriſtians not to ſuffer themſelves to be impoſed on by ſuch ſenſeleſs declamations. The appeal on both ſides muſt be to the Scriptures; not a ſtone of the fabrick can be lawfully reſted on any other ground. If claſſical preſbytery is in the New Teſtament, let its advocates come forward, and fairly refute my arguments. I have no object but truth, and whatever may be publiſhed againſt my pamphlet, in a Chriſtian and candid manner, ſhall receive every attention. But let them not loſe their temper, nor ſubſtitute railing for argument. Neither let them nibble round the ſurface of the ſubject, but let them enter into the eſſence of the debate. If any are convinced, let them beware of ſtifling convictions. Let them not ſuffer intereſt, prejudice, or the fear of reproach, to deter them from obeying *the leaſt* of the commandments of Chriſt. "Whoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and my words in this ſinful and adulterous generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Mark viii. 38.—"He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth ſon or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life ſhall loſe it, and he that loſeth his life for my ſake, ſhall find it," Mat. x. 37.—39.

Though I am decidedly convinced of the complete independency of the apoſtolical churches, and of the duty of following them, I would not be underſtood as placing undue importance upon this point. Chriſtians of every denomination I love, and I will never, I hope, withhold my hand, or my countenance from any who, after impartial inveſtigation, conſcientiouſly differ from me. I can from my heart ſay, "Grace be with all thoſe who love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in ſincerity and truth." Pity indeed, while there are ſo few friends of Jeſus, that thoſe ſhould harbour hard thoughts of each other, for conſcientious differences. But let it not be expected from this, that I ſhall "know any man according to

the flesh," or avoid freely censuring whatever I judge unfounded in scripture, out of compliment to any friend who may countenance it. This would be to "walk as men."

In endeavouring to overthrow the system of presbyterianism, I have only assaulted the main pillars of the edifice; if I have succeeded, the roof and all the rubbish will fall of course. The voluminous defences of presbytery, of former days, I consider too stale to be particularly noticed. I wait till their advocates recognize them. But though every pin of that system could be proved to be divine, it would not affect my opinion of the duty of separating from the synod. I would stand upon ground still tenable. I do not shrink from discussion. Truth will finally prevail.

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REASONS, &c.

CHAPTER I.

REASONS a priori * *why it is probable that the Scriptures contain a Divine Model of Church Government.*

NOTHING can be more unfair than to determine *a priori*, with an air of demonſtrative certainty, what muſt be revealed in Scripture; and then to open the book and compel it to favour the hypotheſis. We are not arrogantly to preſcribe to God what he muſt reveal: our concluſions upon what is proper to be revealed, muſt be ultimately determined by a candid inſpection of the ſacred volume itſelf. Controvertiſts upon the ſubject of church government have frequently abuſed this argument; and have, as it were, almoſt ſettled the diſpute without opening the Bible. Their favourite ſyſtem muſt be *there*, and they are determined to find it. In proportion to the poverty of ſcripture materials, is there a wider ſcope for imagination: where Scripture fails them, *high probability* will amply compenſate for the deficiency, and is even more convenient, as it will vary according to the neceſſities of the different writers.

* By *a priori*, I mean thoſe arguments that render it probable that there is in the New Teſtament a Divine Model of Church Government, previous to the inveſtigation of Scripture, and I uſe it here and elſewhere to prevent a circumlocution.

But though this argument has been abuſed, we are not on that account entirely to abandon it. I apprehend that there is a legitimate uſe which it may have on many queſtions, highly ſerviceable, if reſtrained within its natural limits. Though we are not warranted to conclude with certainty, that there is a divine model of church government in the New Teſtament, till we prove it from itſelf, yet there may be reaſons to render the affirmative extremely probable; which, when conſidered, will animate us in our ſearch, induce us to collect the ſcattered fragments, and prepare us to receive, with gratitude, even the ſcanty pattern which ſcripture may afford. Suppoſe I live near a river on which there are many bleach-greens—after a flood I find a web—I am anxious to know to whom it belongs, for different perſons have loſt. I inſtantly conclude that it will tell its owner itſelf—I open it and examine the ends for the owner's name, but to my great ſurprize, though both are entire, I find no name. I recur to my argument *a priori*—I reaſon thus: Can it be poſſible that a linen draper would be ſo careleſs as not to mark his cloth? This web is entire—therefore certainly it muſt have a mark, though I cannot diſcern it. Encouraged by this, I unfold the web, and glance haſtily over it from end to end; but no mark can I find. Shall I give over? No; the principle upon which my expectation is founded, remains unſhaken, therefore it muſt be owing to my unſkilfulneſs that I am unſucceſsful. I am not accuſtomed to the buſineſs, and therefore the mark has eluded me. I begin again—I ſearch more leiſurely, not a thread of the woof eſcapes my eye. As I advance I ſee ſome little ſtrokes marked thus (ꟷ ıı)—this cannot, I ſay, be the mark; however I will keep it in view. I proceed again, and in a little I find ſome other of the ſame unintelligible ſpecks (ꟷ ꟷ) Strange! what does this mean? Theſe are not letters ſay I, yet they are not accidental. I advance in hopes of ſome clearer diſcovery, but all I can obtain is ſomething like the reſt (ꟷ ıı)—The thought occurs to me to bring theſe together, and try what they will make when joined. At laſt, after trying and fitt-

ing them a thouſand ways I make A H. Overjoyed, I exclaim, this is Mr H—'s my neighbour's web. Juſt ſo I reaſon, and ſo I act, upon the ſubject under conſideration. I ſee an evident neceſſity for ſcriptural direction on this head. I perceive ſtrong antecedent reaſons to expect that the New Teſtament will contain the model of the apoſtolical churches for our direction. With theſe ſentiments I open the Bible; I read and read, collect and compare, and when I get the ſcattered fragments to make an harmonious whole, I am not doubtful of its divine origin.

1. Human manners are much affected by the difference of civil government. The genius of the conſtitution gives a turn to general manners and modes of thinking. Nations have their characteriſtic habits and cuſtoms which the philoſopher can trace to this ſource. May not the ſame effects be expected from particular forms of church government? This influence may not be diſcernible in a compariſon of two individual Chriſtians, trained under different forms of church government, but will be ſenſible when ſects are compared in the bulk. The government that is moſt ſpiritual will unavoidably communicate a tincture of its ſpirit to the maſs of its ſubjects. Now, if the mode of the government of the church be in the ſmalleſt degree influential of manners, I cannot conceive that Chriſt would leave this to human diſcretion.

2. The different theories which have been adopted on this ſubject, have materially influenced the ſentiments of their reſpective advocates, not only in the explanation of the paſſages of ſcripture immediately concerned, but alſo of many in which they are not under the influence of a party ſpirit. All ſcripture truths have a mutual connexion, and it will often inevitably happen, that adopting a wrong theory upon one point, will lead us into other miſtakes in the interpretation of ſcripture, or hide from us the true key of analyſis. To thoſe who have attentively ſtudied this controverſy, it will appear evident that the elucidation of many places in ſcripture is affect-

ed by it. Now, if a difference of opinion on this subject affect the explanation of other passages in scripture, there is, besides its own importance, an additional reason why it is worthy the interposition of God.

3. The general sense of professing Christians in all ages, argues the necessity of scriptural direction on this point. This argument is used with success in favour of revelation, and I see no reason why it should not have all its weight here. The great bulk of professing Christians have in all ages supposed, that they have found in scripture, at least the ground-work of their respective plans. When was the *divine right* giving up? Not till the enlightened advocates of worldly churches saw that it could no longer be pleaded with advantage. When they found that the witness would not speak in their favour, they endeavoured to keep him out of *court* lest he should speak against them.

4. Either unanimity on this point is not a duty, or the scriptures must afford us the means of effecting it. Now, the apostle frequently calls our attention to this as a duty in all things. True, indeed, perfect unanimity is not to be expected; but is this the fault of a defective revelation, or of our remaining corruptions and blindness? There can be nothing a duty which is not revealed. Our differences about the smallest matters in religion are owing to ourselves, and not to a want of scripture direction. Now I know of no way to effect unanimity, but by proposing self-evident truths, or the authority of God in revelation. That the mode of church government does not belong to the former, is sufficiently evident from experience; it must therefore belong to the latter. But unanimity upon this point is *consequentially* of more importance, than upon many others of more *intrinsic* importance. Upon many other points, if Christians have differences of opinion, they have it to themselves; upon this their difference affects each other. Either I must submit to be ruled by the opinion of my neighbour, by a church government which I think Christ did not appoint, or he must do so to me, or we must form differ-

ent ſects. Now upon many other queſtions perhaps more intrinſically important, each of us may hold our own opinions, and bear with each other in the ſame church. I cannot think then that God would leave us without ſcriptural direction on this matter.

5. Will there ever be a day when all ſects ſhall coaleſce? I can ſee no reaſon to doubt of this. Without it, I cannot conceive that perfect harmony, the ſcriptures, with the general conſent of profeſſing Chriſtians, give us reaſon to expect. Diſcrepancy on this point is too great to be conſiſtent with the *increaſe of knowledge* of the latter days. Whether is this to be effected by a new revelation, or by a more plentiful effuſion of the Spirit upon Chriſtians, and a greater attention to the *revealed will* of God? Is there any other way in which revelation can effect this union, but by giving us a model, or directions on this point? I think it not ſuppoſable, that the want of a model in ſcripture would be a means of uniting all Chriſtians. For if there is no model or direction in ſcripture, unanimity or unformity is not a duty. This would be ſaying, that the opinion that union is not a duty, would effect union. Never would there be a greater variety than when this notion ſhould prevail. To effect union, on this ſuppoſition, it would appear to me to be neceſſary to enlarge the powers of the human mind, beyond what hath ever yet appeared in man. The ſublimeſt geniuſes on earth have their differences of opinion on every thing but ſelf-evident truths. But to effect union in this manner is derogatory both to revelation and the office of the Holy Spirit.

6. There cannot be that prompt, cheerful, and dutiful obedience to church rulers, if the model and laws of the church be not in ſcripture. If church rulers have a diſcretionary power to enact laws, they may abuſe that power, and therefore their decrees muſt be received with examination and caution. Thus there may be a difference of opinion with regard to their propriety; and, at all events, the conviction of the duty of obedience will be more ſlowly and circuitouſly obtained.

This will gradually introduce either a ſpirit of diſobedience, or of abject ſervility, among church members. They will be led either to ſlight the authority of church judicatories, or receive their dictates with a ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion. The truth of this remark is abundantly evidenced among thoſe ſects which more or leſs claim the right of acting according to circumſtances; of enacting *laws of expediency and diſcretion.* The people are either the ſlaves and dupes of their church rulers, receiving the decrees of eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies, as the dictates of heaven; or they make light of, and deſpiſe their authority. Complete, unequivocal, cheerful, and conſcientious obedience is to be found only among thoſe who dare not command without opening their commiſſion, and appealing to the laws to which they enforce obedience. Here there is no room either for diſobedience on the one hand, or ſlaviſh obedience on the other. Church members ſee clearly they are not obeying man but God.

7. Either all forms of church government are alike calculated to promote edification, or if one is better than another, that which is beſt will be ſo evident, that all Chriſtians will readily agree in it, or the ſcriptures muſt afford us ſufficient means to diſcover it; otherwiſe they are deficient. I know not that there are any who will agree to the firſt, and it appears from fact that the ſecond is not juſt. In the ſame times, in the ſame city, we find almoſt all the varieties of church government that have exiſted in times and countries the moſt remote. Now, if it is a matter of importance to adopt one form rather than another, and if the children of the ſame family as well as the inhabitants of the ſame city, will differ in their opinions on this ſubject, it would appear to be a matter worthy of divine interference. If there is no divine model, I cannot ſee how God is not to blame for all the variety of ſects occaſioned by difference of ſentiment on this ſubject. If we are left to our own judgment and prudence, there can be no ſin in uſing them; and a variety of ſects is the unavoidable conſequence.

8. Whatever is left to human diſcretion in religion, is of ſuch a nature, that there is no room for the weakeſt Chriſtian to err, nor the leaſt foundation to diſpute ; nor would the ſmalleſt advantage have accrued to the church, by having thoſe things determined, which are left undefined ; but on the contrary ſuch a determination would have been attended with inconveniencies. Such, for inſtance, are the times of meeting for public worſhip on the Lord's day, the order of the ſervices, &c. Who ever complained that theſe things were not confined ? Would it have been of any advantage to Chriſtians, that Chriſt had appointed certain ſtated hours for public worſhip ? Nay, would not this have been attended with many inconveniencies ? But it is quite otherwiſe with the point in queſtion. The determination of this would have been attended with no inconveniencies, but with many and important advantages. The leaving of it undetermined would give unavoidable occaſion to diſſention and ſchiſm.

9. Civil government and legislation require the higheſt exertion of human genius, and the greateſt men who have written on the ſubject, are by no means agreed even in theory, what is the form beſt calculated to promote the happineſs of mankind. In what reſpect is church government a leſs important or difficult matter than civil government ? nay, I conceive the former to be the more difficult, by how much the government of the mind is more difficult than that of the body, and the more important as ſpiritual is greater than temporal happineſs. Is it then ſuppoſable that Jeſus would leave a matter of ſuch importance to the diſcretion of man ? Beſides, Chriſt's diſciples, upon whom this duty would devolve, are the unfitteſt imaginable for ſuch a buſineſs. They are generally " the weak things of this world." True indeed, they all have ſpiritual wiſdom, for " they are all taught of God ;" but this requires political rather than ſpiritual wiſdom. It is evident that every *human* form of church polity is, and muſt be, on the model of the moſt approved civil polities. A Chriſtian then to be calculated for a legislator in the church muſt have

the qualifications of a civil legislator. But the great body of Chriſtians are deſtitute of theſe prerequiſites. They muſt then either yield to be led implicitly by the few learned and enlightened men among them, or be liable to the greateſt miſtakes.

10. I ſuppoſe there is not another queſtion in religion about which ſo much human blood has been ſhed, or on account of which the earth has been filled with ſo much confuſion, as this very queſtion. Does not this argue the neceſſity of a divine model, that God may be vindicated, and the blame be wholly attachable to man?

11. If no divine model had been given, it would have been impoſſible to prevent ambitious men from impoſing on the ſimplicity of the multitude, and promoting ſchemes for their own aggrandizement, under the ſpecious cover of zeal for religion. Such men as Diotrephes would always aſſume the pre eminence. Antichriſt would on this ſuppoſition have ſome apology. Nay, in ſuch a caſe ſome ſort of Antichriſt is unavoidable; and it is not very material whether he be one man, or ſeveral hundreds. I do think, then, that to leave the Chriſtians of the firſt ages without excuſe—that men may be clearly chargeable with the guilt of rearing and nurturing that monſter, it was neceſſary that a divine model ſhould have been given, from which the ſmalleſt deviation was ſinful.

CHAPTER II.

If there be a mode of Church Government in the New Teſtament, what is the Nature of that Form we are warranted to expect?

1. That form of church government which is practicable in all countries, ages and circumſtances, is likelier to be the Scripture model than one which is not. Now there is no country, age or circumſtance, in which the independent plan is not practicable; but to make either preſbytery or prelacy practicable, there muſt be a number of congregations formed in a particular diſtrict. If there were but a ſingle congregation in a kingdom, the independent government would not be affected; if every individual of a nation were a Chriſtian, it is equally adequate. In the former ſituation preſbytery could not exiſt; in the latter, if there were a ſufficient number of paſtors for every congregation, a general aſſembly would be altogether unwieldy. Independency is not fitter for one country than another; preſbytery and prelacy are each peculiarly ſuited to one form of civil government rather than any other. The former was ſuited to the Republic of Geneva, the latter to the Roman Monarchy. Independency meddles not with the ſtate, but in things civil, conſcientiouſly obeys "the powers that be," *whatever be their form or quality.*

2. That form of church government that is capable of the leaſt abuſe, is the likelieſt to be divine. Now unqueſtionably this is independency. If a particular church on this plan degenerates, becomes erroneous, or indifferent, it has no power to injure others, or draw them into its errors. If all the independent churches of a nation were to degenerate except one, that one

cannot be compelled or overawed into their errors. But it is quite contrary with preſbytery. When one congregation becomes dead or erroneous, it has an influence on all the reſt: and when ſuch become the more numerous, they have power to corrupt thoſe that are more pure. On the other hand, in a period of general lukewarmneſs or apoſtacy, if any particular independent church be impreſſed with the duty of reformation, there is nothing in their connection with other churches to clog or prevent them; but a congregation in ſuch a ſituation among preſbyterians would find the whole weight of the connection hanging upon them, and that it would be abſolutely impoſſible for them to ſucceed, without bringing the majority of the whole body to their mind, or by ſeparation. I know indeed it is ſaid that preſbytery is better calculated to prevent error from creeping into congregations, by the power the majority claims over the minority. But how ſhould one man or one congregation keep another from error? By compulſion or perſuaſion? I apprehend there is no lawful means for one church to keep another from error, but by remonſtrance and exhortation. Nay, there is no other method can be ſucceſsful: if this fails, pains, penalties, impriſonments, confiſcations, and death would be uſeleſs. Force may make hypocrites, but will never make a Chriſtian. A law of ſynod may prevent a miniſter from preaching error, as to the five points, but can it enable him to preach "the truth as it is in Jeſus?" Will it enable "the blind to lead the blind, without both falling into the ditch?" Where is the great difference between poiſoning the ſheep, and ſtarving them? But let the hiſtory of ſynods vouch their utility and efficacy in reſtraining error, and preſerving vital religion. They may, for a time, preſerve orthodoxy in *the letter*, but midnight darkneſs may reign with an orthodox creed. "The natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned." Vital religion ſeems in a great meaſure extinguiſhed, even among thoſe ſects who make the higheſt pretenſions to orthodoxy. A violent wrathful ſpirit of party, and an ardent zeal for human forms and hu-

man creeds, ſeem pretty generally ſubſtituted for ſpirituality, and catholic Chriſtian love. Now all the means, of remonſtrance, perſuaſion, exhortation, and entreaty are equally open to independent churches, to preſerve each other from backſliding and error. An independent church may reform other churches, but can receive no injury from them: a preſbyterian congregation may be injured by its connexion, if they are corrupt, but cannot reform them in any other way than what is practicable by an independent church. I conclude then, that as independency hath all the advantages without any of the diſadvantages of preſbytery, as to their influence of connexion, it is more likely to be the ſcripture plan.

3. It is a maxim in philoſophy as well as in divinity, that God does nothing in vain. According to this, if all the ends of government can be obtained in an independent church, all foreign interference being uſeleſs, cannot be appointed of God. That a church under this form of government can ſubſiſt in vigour, is evident from experience; and that it is capable of exerting all neceſſary influence in preſerving others from backſliding, we have alſo ſeen. What poſſible advantage can be gained by a numerous ſubordination of courts? If a light hat of fur be ſufficient to preſerve my head from the weather, why will I cover it with a mill-ſtone?

4. That form of church government which cannot preſerve purity of doctrine without human expedients, is not ſo likely to be the Scripture model, as that which can attain and preſerve the higheſt poſſible degree of vital religion, as well as purity of doctrine, without admitting, in any inſtance, the devices of the wiſdom of man. Now it is generally acknowledged by preſbyterians themſelves, that it is impoſſible to preſerve uniformity of opinion among them, without a formula or confeſſion of faith to be publicly regognized by their members. Now, it muſt be evident to every unprejudiced perſon, that there is no formula in the Scriptures. That conſtitution, then, that requires one to maintain pu-

rity, is not likely to be of God. The ſame may be argued from the neceſſity they are under, to decide by majorities, inſtead of uniformity; debarances, invitations, tokens of admiſſion to the Lord's table, &c.

5. That form of church government that leads us moſt to the ſcriptures, and requires in church-members the greateſt acquaintance with them, is the moſt likely to be that of the New Teſtament. Now, without an intimate acquaintance with the Bible, independents cannot advance a ſtep in church affairs. I might ſpeak from what I have witneſſed of the knowledge of the ſcriptures among independents. I ſpeak only of its neceſſity, ariſing from the conſtitution of their churches. With them it is abſolutely neceſſary not only in church rulers, but private members. The Bible is their code of laws; they have no other confeſſion or book of diſcipline. They can do nothing without it; it muſt be continually in their hand. The rulers rule only by the word of God.—But a man may be a preſbyterian all his life, either paſtor or private member, with a very ſlender acquaintance with the Bible. The knowledge of forms and of ancient uſages, of eccleſiaſtical canons, and books of diſcipline, are the chief qualifications that are neceſſary for a preſbyterian judicatory.

6. That form of church government that needs moſt the preſence of God and prayer, is the moſt likely to be the Divine model.—Now the independent is the only plan in which there is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, room for the *manifeſt* interpoſition of God. There are inſtances in which prayer is their only reſource. Their doing all things by unanimity, creates a peculiar neceſſity for prayer. If there be but one member of a different mind from the reſt, it is the ſame as if there were the one half. In ſuch a ſituation, the promiſed preſence of Jeſus is their only refuge; prayer is their only remedy; and when the difficulty is thus removed, which perhaps will ſcarcely ever fail, if explanation, remonſtrance, and intreaty be affectionately applied, all the praiſe will be

ſeen to belong to God.—On the other hand, a preſbyterian court can proceed as independent of God as a court of civil juſtice. True, indeed, it is uſual to aſk him to preſide; but can they not proceed ſmoothly enough without him? Is there ever a ſituation in which they are not as competent to do buſineſs, and ſettle the moſt critical affair, as the parliament of England? I cannot think, then, that an inſtitution is of God's appointment, which does not *need* God's preſence.

7. That form of church government which is moſt favourable to liberty of conſcience, in which the individual experiences the leaſt undue influence in determining his principles and conduct in religious matters, is the moſt likely to be the ſcripture model.—The ſcriptures are the only rule of faith and practice, and every man is bound to judge of them, and determine their meaning for himſelf. He may uſe helps to underſtand them; but if he underſtands them differently from others, he is bound to act upon his own belief, rather than that of another. Now this liberty can be completely enjoyed as a right in no other than an independent church. True, indeed, in ſome preſbyterian connexions, individuals may enjoy all the liberty they deſire; but does this flow from the nature of the conſtitution of claſſical preſbytery, or from the indulgence, or indifference of thoſe connected with them? The very leading idea in preſbytery, that for which it is moſt prized by its greateſt admirers, is this very power of reſtraining principle and conduct in matters of religion. If preſbytery is robbed of this power, what end does it ſerve? It is then nothing more than a ſelection of members from different congregations met for counſel and advice. But where is the preſbytery that acts ſolely upon this principle? If there be any, they are, as to conſtitution, a ſort of independents. There are indeed preſbyterian connexions in which individuals may be Socinians or Calviniſts, but this is the reſult of connivance in the general body, and not the genuine fruit of preſbytery. Whenever the body chooſes to claim its right, a majority may compel an individual to embrace every ſhibboleth of their creed, and direct

and circumscribe his labours as they please. But view genuine presbytery among the stricter sects and it will clearly appear that in all things there must be a complete uniformity. Forbearance is not known. I do not say that we are bound to hold religious intercourse with any individual, or body of men, that we judge destitute of the truth. But as long as we can look upon a man as a brother *born again* and walking in the commandments of God, we are bound to exercise forbearance towards him in other matters of comparatively less importance. But if there are some presbyterian connexions liberal as to principle, are they equally so as to religious conduct? Can any of their members enjoy the privilege of acting for himself, as well as of thinking? Is he not amenable to their bar, if he transgress any laws of theirs, although he judge them contrary to the laws of Christ? I conclude, then, that although from connivance, there may be more liberty of conscience in some presbyterian connexions than others, yet as a power of compulsion is inherent in the very nature of presbytery, it is not likely to be the scripture model.

8. Nothing is more universally felt in the human heart than ambition. Nothing our Lord found more difficult to repress in his immediate followers. That form of church government, then, which affords the fewest incitements to ambition, is likely to be the model which he would pitch upon. Here also, the independent will stand foremost. It is not capable of an adulterous alliance with the world. Its spiritual nature has no charms to tempt the meretricious embraces of worldly men. Though presbytery is not the most exceptionable in this view, yet it is not without objections. It has been courted by, and wedded to the world, and a hideous progeny has issued from the connexion. It has fought for, and in its turn obtained temporal power and riches; and whilst it held the sword, it was more like to Mahomet of Mecca, than Jesus of Nazareth. The forensic nature of their courts, also, is too much calculated to foster pride, by inducing men to aspire to be the lead-

ers of parties, and make a figure in aſſemblies, collected from every part of a province or kingdom.

9 If there be any particular model of church government in the New Teſtament, it is probable that the enlightened advocates of it will reſt the cauſe on the ſame foundation, however various may be their arguments. For if ſeveral intelligent men embrace the ſame model, and have the ſame means of information, they have every inducement to unanimity, and if unintereſted, or unprejudiced, are likely to defend it on the ſame general ground. If they take different and oppoſite hypotheſes to ſerve as a ground work for their ſuperſtructure, they are not likely to have had a common ground in ſcripture. Now the advocates of preſbytery take quite different grounds to reſt it on. Some defend the whole machine as divine, to the ſmalleſt pin. Others pretend to ſee only the ſkeleton in ſcripture, with a power to fill up the outlines. Others defend it as a lawful human ſyſtem, upon the ground that we are bound to no particular mode of church government in ſcripture. Some find the preſbyterian elder in ſcripture, and ſome make him only a prudential human expedient. Some give him a ſeat in eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies in his own right; others in right of the people whom he repreſents.—They are as divided alſo about the right of nomination of elders. Some give this right to the congregation, or ſeat holders, whether ſervants of Chriſt or of Satan; others claim it for the old ſeſſion. Now, I think the inference which any rational, diſintereſted, unprejudiced man would draw from this, is, that they have no common ſource from which they draw their ideas. If they had, certainly preſbytery would not be ſuch a camelion. If they all ſaw the ſame picture in the ſcriptures, ſurely they would not give ſo many contradictory accounts of it, when it was their intereſt to agree. If preſbytery had been in ſcripture, of all its friends Dr. Campbell of Aberdeen, was the beſt able to defend it; yet Dr. Campbell gives up its divine right, and proves beyond contradiction, that the apoſtolical churches were independent. If ever preſbytery could be found in ſcrip-

ture, the luminous and penetrating mind of Dr. Campbell, who lived and died at the head of a Scotch univerſity, would certainly have traced it. The pen that hath ſo unanſwerably overthrown the *jus divinum* of the church of England, would not have failed to have eſtabliſhed the church of Scotland on that enviable foundation, had it been poſſible.

10. The end of church government, and church meetings of every kind, muſt be the edification and growth of the members, and the promotion of brotherly love. That form which is beſt calculated to promote theſe ends, is the moſt likely to have been inſtituted by Chriſt. Now, we might reſt this upon matters of fact, in favour of the independents; but we ſhall content ourſelves by obſerving, that their peculiar advancement in experimental religion, deadneſs to the world, devotedneſs to Chriſt, zeal for his cauſe, and love towards the brethren, are much the reſult of the principles of their conſtitution, in which they are diſtinguiſhed from other ſocieties. Some of theſe are their ſeparation from the world, into a ſpiritual communion, in which they can all look upon each other as Chriſtians, upon good evidence—their frequent church meetings, and mutual public exhortations—the care and watchfulneſs that every member has over every other as his "brother's keeper," and not committing church power to a few—the opportunity of diſcovering every talent, and occupying even the ſmalleſt in its proper ſphere—the cloſe union of all the members rich and poor, each acting on the other as the different wheels of a watch ſet in motion by the main ſpring. Their church order reſembles the Macedonian phalanx, which ſo long as it kept its ranks, was invincible. There is here no poſſibility of playing the coward: each encourages, and in a manner compels the other to do his duty, as a good ſoldier of Chriſt. When individuals are under temptation to give ground, and begin to backſlide, the whole body acts as a rere rank, to encourage them to behave valiantly, to ſupport them when overpowered, to give them an opportunity to rally when they are thrown into confuſion, to prevent them from running

from the field of battle, and to push them on again to the engagement. The great piety and zeal, discovered in individuals of other sects, is no objection to this. Such persons would have been still more eminent, had they enjoyed a purer communion. There may be healthy men in a very unhealthy climate. This, however, would not induce any man to say, that India is as healthful a climate as Ireland. Compare the nature of the church constitutions, and then compare the general body of the members of the one, with that of the other, and if you are unprejudiced, you will not be long in suspence. I forbear to draw a picture of the generality of presbyterian connexions: it is really too hideous to be reviewed. Besides, many of the evils among some of them, are not the necessary result of the presbyterian constitution.

11. Christ's institutions father themselves. If a child had been lost, and after many years, several pretenders had come to the father, and there be not sufficient evidence from testimony to determine between them, would it not be very proper to look for a resemblance to the parents, and their other children, either in bodily appearance, temper, or genius? If such a striking resemblance is found in any of them it will be instantly concluded that he *fathers himself.*— In the same manner it is reasonable to expect a family likeness in all the ordinances and works of God. Let us then apply this rule in ascertaining the divine legitimacy of the form of church government. Christ has had such a child, but he has been exchanged at the nurse, and a vile impostor has been imposed upon the world, during all the dark ages of the reign of Antichrist. Since the reformation, various pretenders have laid claim to the honour of heavenly birth. It might be highly serviceable, in judging of their pretensions, to compare the features, mien, temper, and genius of each claimant, with those of the father and his other undoubted children. I shall content myself at present, by examining and tracing a few of the lineaments of two of them, presbytery and independency.

God's wiſdom is fooliſhneſs to the world, and the wiſdom of the world is fooliſhneſs with God. Whatever, then, be the divine form of church government. it is evident that it muſt not be one which would be ſuggeſted by human prudence or policy, that it may appear to be of God, analogous to his precedure in other inſtances, and having a neceſſity for his preſence and guidance. It muſt be one which would appear defective and inadequate, in the eſtimation of the wiſdom of this world, that God may have all the glory of upholding it himſelf. This is exactly the manner of the Divine procedure in every other inſtance. The wiſdom of the world expected Chriſt to have appeared in far different and oppoſite circumſtances, and to have acted in a quite contrary manner, in erecting and eſtabliſhing his kingdom: but the Divine wiſdom appears in this, that the Almighty power of God is manifeſted in accompliſhing what had evidently no other ſupport. As the goſpel was firſt propagated by means the moſt unlikely to ſucceed, in themſelves the moſt inadequate; to ſhew that the unſeen hand of God upheld and ſpread it, and that the Divine procedure be conſiſtent, it ſeems neceſſary that the government be ſeen ſolely to reſt on *Immanuel's* ſhoulders. As this King was introduced and inaugurated, and his kingdom erected in a manner directly the reverſe of human prudence and policy, ſo alſo is it probable will he govern it. To conduct the government of his kingdom upon any of the plans of human governments by meaſures and aſſemblies formed upon a worldly model, would be inconſiſtent with the whole conduct and procedure of Jeſus.

Now, if there be any juſtice in this reaſoning, a very child may apply it to the point in hand—nay, let our enemies themſelves be the judges. The very arguments by which they ſupport preſbytery, the very objections which they make to independency, fully prove to which of them this character belongs. Preſbytery has every feature of a child of this world's wiſdom. It is entirely a political inſtitution, every part of it analogous to civil polity. In this view, it is really a vigorous republic,

and so far as its power extends, it shews that it knows well how to exert it. Its decision, by majorities, instead of unanimity; representation in ecclesiastical assemblies; subordination of courts; and the right of appeal; forms and etiquette of business, &c. are all borrowed from the world. On the contrary, independency, like Christ himself, has never approved itself to the wisdom of this world. Nay, the only arguments that can plausibly be urged against it, is its insufficiency for any other than *primitive times*. In no civil institution in the world, are the distinguishing features of independency to be found. It could not govern a private family of unregenerate men. It has been called by those who did not understand its constitution, the *purest democracy*, but it is evident that it is rather a *Christocracy*. Christ alone governs. There is not a law or regulation left to the wisdom of man. What civil government ever existed, in which the unanimous consent of every member was necessary, in every instance? Human affairs could never be conducted in this manner, nor could a body of unconverted men be governed in a church in this way. Nothing but the unseen, almighty power of God could have protected and propagated the gospel, in the circumstances of its appearance, opposed by all worldly powers: nothing but the presence and power of Jesus could make the simple machine of independent church government, effect its end. I conclude, then, that if a likeness to God, and an analogy to his procedure in other instances, be any token of childship, independency, and not presbytery, is the lawful heir.

But let us pursue the comparison in some other instances, and we will see that presbytery has not a feature of the family. In all the institutions of God there is a remarkable simplicity, but classical presbytery is the most clumsy and complicated machine that could possibly be invented, and a tedious round-about way of settling differences, and transacting church business. Several hundred men, from the most distant parts of a province or kingdom, meeting annually, besides all their subordinate meetings, is a thing that bears no resemblance to the sim-

plicity of other gospel institutions. When united to those, it is like a sober, plain-dressed gentleman, with a huge military hat and feather; or like a small neat chapel with a towering steeple. But peep for a minute into their general synod or assembly. What pomp, what statelines, what importance do they assume! See yon young orator artfully apologizing for his youth, and this aged gentleman looking importance from his years of standing. Stop a little; here is rudeness; "*chair!*" "*chair!*" there will be a quarrel about a trifle; "but the apostles quarrelled at Jerusalem."—Here now are several days spent, and what is done? Nothing about religion for its advantage; nothing but what could have been done to better purpose in any congregation.

I might trace the picture much further, but I shall only barely mention, that presbytery is too expensive for a "kingdom not of this world." The other children of the family live on a trifle; if this is the heir, he is a rake.

CHAPTER III.

On the Obligation of Apoſtolical Practice.

HAVING given ſome reaſons to ſhew the antecedent probability of a divine model of church government, with ſome obſervations with reſpect to the plan we are entitled to expect, before I proceed to examine the ſcriptures reſpecting the claims of preſbytery and independency, I ſhall endeavour, in this chapter, to eſtabliſh the obligation of the practice of the apoſtolic churches. Not that this is more neceſſary to me than to the true preſbyterians, but becauſe it is beginning to be faſhionable with the members of worldly churches, when they are driven from the ſcriptures, to take refuge in *the liberty of deviating from the example of the apoſtles* *.

1. The combined weight of all the arguments *a priori*, fall into the ſcale of the obligation of the example of the apoſtolical churches. We cannot poſitively determine what the Bible contains, till we examine it; but if there be every reaſon antecedently to expect a divine form of church government, and if it is poſſible to trace the practice of the apoſtolical churches, is there not every reaſon to look upon this as the divine model, exhibited in the ſcriptures as an univerſal pattern? The arguments *a priori*, I grant are inconcluſive, if no form could be pointed out from the ſcripture; but if it be poſſible to aſcertain the conſtitution of the apoſtolical churches, I ſee no good reaſon why they ſhould not have their full force. Like an O in figures, they draw all their value from their ſituation;

* Dr Stillingfleet is the great patron of this hypotheſis. In his *Irenicum* he endeavours to unite preſbyterians and epiſcopalians by propoſing a ſcheme of a ſort of preſbyterian-epiſcopacy. But to effect this, it was neceſſary for him to rid himſelf of the obligation of taking the apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt for an example. I originally intended to have followed the Doctor through his performance; but I found I could not do ſo without exceeding all bounds.

ſtanding alone they are worth nothing; united to the approved apoſtolical practice. I do not ſee how their worth can be depreciated or their force invalidated.—If a divine plan of church government be extremely neceſſary, by what authority does any man reject the apoſtolical?

2. Not only the general ſenſe of profeſſing Chriſtians is on the ſide of the obligation of apoſtolical example, but the very advocates of the contrary opinion evidently betray their chagrin, that it is not in their favour.—How anxious are they to catch at every thing that looks like approving of their reſpective churches? What abundant pains do they take to detect every part of the ſyſtem of their adverſaries, that is not apoſtolical? Every ſect goes as far as it can in company with the apoſtles; it is not till they cannot follow, that the apoſtles are acknowledged as inſufficient guides. Did ever any man think of this hypotheſis, till he found apoſtolical practice againſt him? Could any of the worldly churches produce uniform apoſtolical practice on their ſide, how would they triumph!

3. If the apoſtolical churches are not a model to us, then all thoſe numerous ſcriptures that are employed in deſcribing them, or in giving them directions, are uſeleſs to us. Why is ſuch lumber contained in the word of God? All ſcripture is ſaid to be "given by inſpiration," and "to be neceſſary;" but if we are not to imitate the apoſtolical churches, there are many paſſages in the New Teſtament that are now abſolutely uſeleſs. Accordingly, it is very evident how unintereſting ſuch portions of ſcripture are to all that hold themſelves at liberty to deviate from apoſtolical practice. Such perſons have a much more barren and jejune revelation than others.

4. Either the apoſtles acted by divine direction, or by their own wiſdom, in the conſtitution of churches. If the latter, they would undoubtedly have told us ſo.—But if, as there is every reaſon to believe, they acted by divine command, the form of church government they

inſtituted, can never be changed but by the ſame authority. If any form is better than another, ſurely the apoſtolical is the beſt. It cannot then be a matter of indifference whether we follow the beſt, or adopt a worſe: If the Holy Ghoſt had judged it expedient to adopt a different form in a different period, or in different circumſtances, would we not have ſome intimation of it? Without a Divine licenſe we are not at liberty to alter or infringe in the ſmalleſt degree. We may as well aſſume the right of altering any other apoſtolical inſtitution, as that of church government.

5. There can be no danger in the cloſeſt imitation of the apoſtolical churches. Is any man ſure that he does not diſpleaſe God by refuſing to imitate them? Between the certainty of pleaſing, on the one ſide, and the poſſibility of offending on the other, the choice which a Chriſtian ſhould make, is evident.

6. No perſon who pleads the authority of apoſtolical example for the firſt day Sabbath, or any other purpoſe, can conſiſtently reject it in this inſtance.

7. A plan in model, and not in ſyſtematic deſcription, is what we are entitled to expect. A direct and formal treatiſe on the ſubject, which ſome people look for, would be altogether anomalous in ſcripture. After-ages are no where addreſſed but in the perſons, as it were, of the apoſtolical churches: we are not known but as members of them. Whatever is ſaid to them, is ſaid to us. Thus our Lord, promiſing his continual preſence with his ſervants in preaching the goſpel, addreſſes them all in every age, in the perſon of the apoſtles then preſent, "Lo I am with *you* alway to *the end of the world*." "Where two or three of *you* are met, there am I." The apoſtles alſo, ſpeaking of what was to happen in every after-age, addreſs thoſe to whom they write as concerned, and warn them of what was to happen to us and our ſucceſſors to the end of the world. "We, "which are alive and remain unto the coming of the "Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep."—

Here the apostle addresses, in the person of the church of the Thessalonians, which then was, those Christians which shall be on the earth at the time of the second coming of our Lord. I might quote innumerable examples. were it necessary Now this being the case, that after-ages are addressed only in the person of apostolical churches, how absurd is it to expect a formal treatise on church government? Every necessary instruction must have been given in the forming of the churches. How preposterous would it be for an apostle, after he had formed a church, and left it, to write a treatise to that church on the method of forming a church! All then that can be expected, is an incidental account of apostolical practice. The subject cannot be formally, but indirectly, and. as it were, unintentionally handled. Suppose, for instance, the apostle Paul had founded the churches of Edinburgh, and after his departure, had written a letter to them, to establish them in the faith: would any rational man expect a treatise on the constitution of a church, which he had already constituted. No, all we could expect, would be an allusion to what he had done. I say, then, according to the analogy of the manner of revelation, there is not room for any other information on church government, than an account of apostolical practice. Here, I think, Dr. Cambell fails of his usual acumen, or he would not have expected the subject treated in "another manner," upon the supposition, that we are absolutely bound to the constitution of apostolical churches. But some other observations on this subject, I will reserve to another place.

8. The tabernacle itself was made according to model, and not from a verbal delineation, or treatise. "Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. For see, (saith he,) that thou make all things according to the *pattern* shewed to thee in the mount.' Now we have also a pattern in the mount, for our New Testament churches, exhibited to us, in those of apostolical constitution.— To this pattern, we are to look for every part of our constitution and discipline. Let every man take care that he make every thing in a gospel church, after the pattern of that ex-

hibited to us in the ſcriptures. This is a divine model; to add to it, or take from it, will ſpoil the beauty, and diminiſh the ſtrength of the building.

9. We are often called upon, to be followers of the apoſtles, without any exception or limitation.—By what authority then do any except from this rule, the conduct of the apoſtles, in the formation of churches? From every general command, I think there can be no lawful exception, but what is impoſſible, ſinful, or otherwiſe determined. If we are called upon without reſerve, to follow the apoſtles, I think the injunction extends, not merely to their conduct as men, but particularly as our examples in all church affairs. If I juſtify a quarrelſome diſpoſition from the example of Paul and Barnabas, I am condemned by the ſcriptures. But this quarrel was not recorded for nothing. It is for an example, to guard us againſt ſuch a temper. If any one would contend for the duty of celibacy, from the example of Paul, his example, in this, is declared not to be binding. If any man would take it into his head to work miracles, like the apoſtles, this is impoſſible, without receiving the power of an apoſtle. Yet theſe, and ſuch as theſe, are the mighty objections alleged by Dr. Stillingfleet, againſt the obligation of apoſtolical example. But I aſk, is the imitation of apoſtolical churches ſinful, impoſſible, or otherwiſe determined, in any part of ſcripture. If not, I demand a reaſon for excepting it from the general injunction *. With what reaſon, then, does Dr. Stillingfleet refuſe,

* Not only the conduct of the apoſtles in the churches, is exhibited as an example to us, but their very antecedent characters, as well as their after-trials, ſupports, joys, &c are recorded for our encouragement, inſtruction, or example, to avoid or practiſe. The great deſign of the Almighty, in allowing the rebellion of Paul to proceed to ſuch a height, is ſaid, to be an example to us, that the moſt notorious ſinners might not be afraid to come to Chriſt, 1 Tim. i. 16. Paul's declining to avail himſelf of his right to live by the goſpel, and his working with his own hands, are declared to be for an example to Chriſtians to ſupport themſelves by induſtry, 2 Theſſ. iii. 9.

with triumph, to be bound by apoſtolical example, till we produce him an expreſs command, for that particular inſtance? May we not, with the ſame reaſon, demand a poſitive command, at the end of every apoſtolical example? Here is a general command; let it be ſhewn, why this particular inſtance of the obligation of their example, in the conſtitution of apoſtolical churches, ſhould be excepted. Beſides, if the obſervation above be juſt, that we are known only as members of the apoſtolical churches, what room was there for a command to after-ages, as diſtinct from that in which they wrote? An expreſs command to a church, to continue the form of government, which an apoſtle inſtituted, we would think ſuperfluous. This is always ſuppoſed, without a poſitive declaration to the contrary. No, it lies not upon us to produce ſuch a command, but on thoſe who take upon them, to ſet aſide the obligation of apoſtolical example; it is certainly incumbent, that they ſhould produce their warrant. If God inſtituted the independent plan, before any man can warrantably deviate from it, it behoves him to produce from ſcripture a ſpecific licence.

10. But though the manner of divine revelation forbids us to expect a direct addreſs to after-ages upon the obligation of apoſtolical practice, yet we have what is equal to it. There are inſtances in which an older, completely organized apoſtolical church, is exhibited as a pattern to others, more imperfect. Now, if the apoſtolical churches are exhibited as a model to others, and if ſome are praiſed or blamed for their conformity to, or diſagreement from them, it is very clear, that the apoſtles intended that all churches, in every age, ſhould be upon the ſame model 1 Cor. vii. 17. "So ordain I in all churches." 1 Cor. xiv. 33. "For God is not the author of confuſion, but of peace, as in all churches of the ſaints." Here, the ſame order is intimated to exiſt in all churches. But how is God the God of order and peace in all the churches of ſaints, if he has not ordered every thing himſelf? If he has left men to chooſe their form of church government, and to

make laws for themſelves, could it be ſaid, that he is not a God of confuſion? The confuſion that would exiſt on that ſuppoſition, would be boundleſs and endleſs. 1 Cor. xi. 16. "We have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the churches of God." Here the other apoſtolical churches are exhibited, as a model to this. 1 Cor. xvi. 1. "Now, concerning the collection for the ſaints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye." Here, the example of the churches of Galatia, is exhibited as a model to the church of Corinth. Titus, i. 5. "For this purpoſe, left I thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, *as I had appointed thee*" Here, we ſee, that in ſetting in order the things that were wanting, even the evangeliſt Titus was not left to his diſcretion, but was to act in every thing, *as Paul had appointed*. Titus had his inſtructions, as an officer from his general. Can we pretend to greater power?

11. Is it poſſible for a church to exiſt and flouriſh without obſerving any other laws, rules, or regulations, without any other offices, or modification of offices; without any other diſcipline or ſanction of diſcipline; without any other teſt of admiſſion, or means of preſerving purity: but what are to be collected from apoſtolical example and the ſcattered information of Scripture? If this queſtion can be anſwered in the affirmative, what apology can men plead for their innovations? The advocates for a liberty of deviating from the form of apoſtolical churches, lay the weight of their cauſe upon this argument: "No form of church government could anſwer all ages, countries, and circumſtances." What do men mean by this jargon? Do they mean, that no form would anſwer for a civil eſtabliſhment under every form of civil government? Do they mean, that none could be given to ſuit the various humours of carnal men? Yes, the true meaning of this objection, if they would put it into words, is, that no one form could be given to ſerve as a part of a political ſyſtem, under different forms of civil government —that the ſimple apoſtolical model, ſuited only apoſ-

tolical times, being incapable of governing that mixed multitude, of which all worldly churches conſiſt—and that it was unſuitable to the dignity of an aſpiring clergy. But theſe are the very credentials of its divine appointment. It is eminently calculated to govern Chriſt's children, who, like the Spartan youth, have their minds moulded to their laws; but it will always be found to fail, when members are admitted, not of the character of the members of apoſtolical churches. Nay, one impure member, if not cut off, when detected, would ſtop the harmonious procedure of the whole machine, as effectually as a watch is ſtopped by the accidental admiſſion of a hair. But, can a man be pleaſed with the proſtitution of his wife? Can Chriſt be pleaſed, or his cauſe advanced, by the proſtitution of his ordinances? Shall the ſpiritual kingdom of Chriſt, change its appearance, with the fluctuating opinions of the world; the varying laws of temporal kingdoms; or the caprice of carnal men?

CHAPTER IV.

PRESBYTERY EXAMINED.

HAVING, in the preceding chapters, ſtated ſome reaſons to render a divine model of church government probable—having ſhewn ſome characteriſtics of that which is likely to be the ſcripture model—and endeavoured to eſtabliſh the obligation of apoſtolical example—let us now proceed to inquire, *What is actually the mind of the Scriptures upon this point?* Let preſbytery firſt come under review. One thing I would premiſe, as a caution to myſelf and all who treat this ſubject—*Let us never forget, when we are interpreting ſcripture texts, that they are the words of the Holy Ghoſt.* He that forces them, to make them countenance or avoid diſcountenancing his ſyſtem, is guilty of an attempt to compel the Holy Ghoſt to ſpeak a lie, and bear falſe witneſs. How guilty! how infamous is the wretch that employs, or compels another to perjure himſelf to ſerve his intereſt! But how much more criminal and infamous is the man who would put a forced interpretation on the language of the *Holy One!* I have heard a man ſay, that indeed it was very criminal to employ a perſon to *ſwear a lie;* but if at an aſſizes he ſhould run ſhort of an evidence, he would think no great harm of getting one *to ſwear the truth for him*, though he was not a witneſs of the truth of the matter. I am afraid there are too many ſcripture critics who act upon this principle. They lay it down as a matter indiſputable, that ſuch a tenet is true, and expreſſed clearly in ſome paſſages of ſcripture, and therefore they will ſet about to ſilence, or force other texts to compliance, by perverſion. Let us then attend ſimply to the teſtimony of plain

Scripture, in its plain acceptation. It is really the intereſt of the Chriſtian, if he could allow himſelf to think ſo, to diſcover and embrace truth, though it ſhould deprive him of the deareſt earthly poſſeſſion.

Another thing that muſt be attended to, by all who plead for the divine right of any particular form of church government, is, that nothing be admitted but what is clearly founded in the ſcriptures, either in precept or example. Thoſe that pretend a divine model, muſt produce it, without the help of conjecture, or probabilities, to complete it.

The great bulwark of Preſbytery, according to its friends, is contained in the 15th chap. of the Acts of the Apoſtles. Let us therefore examine this portion of ſcripture, by the rules of candid criticiſm, and ſee if in any thing, it give its countenance to this mode of church government *. The matter of fact related, ſeems to be this: Certain teachers had gone down to Antioch from Judea, who had inculcated the neceſſity of the obſervance of the Moſaic law. From verſe 24, it appears, that if they were not actually ſent out by the church of Jeruſalem, to preach the goſpel, they at leaſt wiſhed to have it underſtood, that they had apoſtolical authority. The church of Jeruſalem, in their letter, acknowledge that they went out from them, and do not deny their being ſent by them; but affirm that they had no ſuch doctrine in charge from them, as the circumciſion of Gentile converts. Previous to this, Paul and Barnabas had returned thither from their firſt itinerancy. Of conſequence, they oppoſed this doctrine; and after they had much fruitleſs diſcuſſion upon the ſubject, it was reſolved by the brethren in Antioch to ſend Paul and Barnabas, and certain others, to conſult the apoſtles and church of Jeruſalem from whom theſe teachers had come out. But let us read the chapter with calmneſs and attention, and

* This ſubject is fully and ably diſcuſſed by Mr Ewing of Glaſgow, in "A Lecture on part of the 15th Chapter of the Acts of the Apoſtles," which the reader would do well to conſult.

we will see that it contains not one feature of modern presbytery.

1. Where do we find here the Presbyterian subordination of courts? Was the matter first tried by the church session at Antioch? Was it next carried to a presbytery? Was this appeal from a presbytery at Antioch? Who sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem? It will puzzle the most metaphysical head to discover a session and a presbytery, or either, at Antioch; yet, if it cannot be proved that this appeal came from a presbytery of ministers and lay elders at Antioch, the meeting at Jerusalem cannot be a synod.

2. If this be allowed to be a synod, it will cut off all superior and inferior courts. There cannot be a superior court, for this determined for the whole Christian world, and from it there could be no appeal. There cannot be subordinate presbyteries and church sessions; for this appeal was not from any inferior court, but immediately from the brethren at Antioch. I know it is said, that the presbytery of Antioch deputed Paul and Barnabas; but it is easier to say this than to prove it. The antecedent to the verb "determined," is not clearly expressed. The structure of the sentence, if the sense of the passage would admit, would allow Paul and Barnabas, or the false teachers themselves, or both together, to be the persons, who "determined." But this will make nothing for presbytery; nay, it would overthrow it. For if Paul and Barnabas, or these with the false teachers, or if the latter only, "determined" to depute the messengers, there is an end to presbytery. It is no unusual thing, however, in reading the New Testament, to be obliged to look back a little for the antecedent to the verb, or to take it from the general sense of the passage. The most natural interpretation is, that the brethren deputed Paul and Barnabas; or that it was done conjointly by the brethren, the false teachers, and Paul and Barnabas. This is clearer, from the words, as they stand in the original, which are more literally translated: "They *appointed* Paul and Barnabas, and

certain other of them, to *go up*," &c. The falſe teachers could not appoint Paul and Barnabas to go up to Jeruſalem, nor is it likely they deſired it, as they muſt have known that they received no ſuch *charge* from that church. But be this as it will, upon no ſuppoſition could they have been ſent by a preſbytery, becauſe no ſuch thing is mentioned in the connexion. Whatever be the antecedent to ταραξαν, it muſt be found among the perſons ſpoken of in the preceding verſes. It may as well be ſaid that the magiſtrates of Antioch ſent them, as the ſuppoſed preſbytery of that place. There is the ſame evidence for the one as the other. Beſides, if the appeal had been from a preſbytery, would not the anſwer have been to the appellants? The letter of the church of Jeruſalem would not have been addreſſed to the brethren, which are of the Gentiles, but to the preſbytery of Antioch?

3. This aſſembly carried all things by complete unanimity; therefore can be no model to any aſſembly, in which a majority decides for the whole. Suppoſe it to have actually been a ſynod, no decree of a modern ſynod could plead its authority, which was not carried unanimouſly.

4. Suppoſe this to have been a ſynod, it only warrants their meeting, as matter of diſpute may ariſe among the churches. It would give no countenance to regular periodical meetings. But preſbyterian courts have their ſtated meetings, whether or not there be buſineſs of importance to juſtify their meeting.

5. The deciſion of the church at Jeruſalem was obligatory, not only in the church of Antioch, which had appealed, but upon all churches in the world. In the letter, verſe 23, Syria and Cilicia are expreſsly included. And in Paul's ſecond journey, he and his companion gave the churches in the cities through which they paſſed, the decrees ordained by the apoſtles and elders at Jeruſalem. Will any man ſay, that there were repreſentatives from theſe places, in the Jeruſalem

assembly? It cannot then be a model for a synod, where none are bound, but those represented. If synods will quote this for a precedent, they must no longer confine themselves to make laws for their own connexion, but decide in matters of religion for the whole Christian world. But as this assembly consisted solely of the members of one church, if it be a warrant for foreign interference of any kind, it will prove that an individual church, consisting of its rulers and brethren, should give law to all the churches of the universe.

6. By what authority is the meeting at Jerusalem called a synod? Who were the members that composed it? Were they not the apostles, the elders, and the brethren of the church at Jerusalem *only?* Was there a single representative either minister or lay elder, from any other church upon earth? Those who accompanied Paul and Barnabas from Antioch, were not representatives but messengers of that church to report the matter of fact, and receive the decision. Accordingly, the letters are in the name not of a representative council, but of the apostles, the elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, from whom the troublesome teachers went out. How absurd would be their language, upon the supposition that there were representatives in it, from the church of Antioch, and others "For as much as we have heard, that certain which went out *from us.*" Could the Antioch, and other representatives, put their signatures to this letter? Could they say that they went out *from them?* They went out from the church at Jerusalem, and no one could say, "they went out *from us*," but the church at Jerusalem. The language "went out *from us*," plainly excludes from that assembly, all members from foreign churches.

7. As there were no representatives in this meeting, from any other church, so *all the members or brethren* of the church at Jerusalem, were admitted. What is there similar to this in presbytery. So far from being admitted into general meetings, they have no share

in the adminiſtration of the affairs of a ſingle congregation. The miniſter and elders, are the ſole judges in all diſputes. The people muſt make their mind known, by petition to church courts. Upon the ſuppoſition, that this was a repreſentative aſſembly, conſiſting of members from the different churches of Judea, Samaria, Antioch, &c. by what authority did *the brethren* of the church at Jeruſalem, take a ſhare in the deliberations? What peculiar right had they over the brethren of all other churches, to a place in this aſſembly? Why did not the church at Jeruſalem chooſe repreſentatives, as well as the other churches? Or, if the Jeruſalem brethren were to be admitted, why not all the members of all the churches, or at leaſt, as many of them as might chooſe to attend? What preſbyterian aſſembly is ſo conſtituted? This would deſtroy the balance of power. The admiſſion of the brethren of the church at Jeruſalem, plainly ſhews that it was not a repreſentative aſſembly.

8. This was an appeal to inſpired authority, which, in after ages, could be imitated only by appealing to the apoſtolical writings. The meſſage was to the apoſtles, and to the elders, who were men endowed with the gifts of the Spirit. This was nothing elſe than our appeal to the Scriptures. The apoſtolical writings were not then in exiſtence; the apoſtles themſelves were in the room of the New Teſtament. There was no other poſſible way of deciding the diſpute. The Scriptures that were then in being had nothing *expreſs* upon the ſubject. But what queſtion can now ariſe in any church, which the Scriptures cannot determine. They contain a full and perfect rule of faith and practice. This queſtion is ſettled for ever, and the deciſion is a part of Scripture. Never can the ſame, or a ſimilar, again recur. Paul and Barnabas, it is true, were at Antioch; but they, in ſome ſort, were eſteemed a party, by the judaizing teachers. Beſides this important queſtion, the condition upon which the Gentiles were to be received into the church, behoved to be diſcuſſed and ſettled in the moſt public manner, that the

Jews in every part of the world, might the more readily unite with them. Accordingly, it ſeems probable that this was the time, and this the occaſion, that Paul went up to Jeruſalem, by revelation, Gal. ii. 2 *. The apoſtles might have decided the queſtion themſelves, but it behoved to be done in this manner, becauſe it was a matter in which the church of Jeruſalem was concerned, as the falſe teachers had gone out from them, and becauſe they wiſhed in this firſt church, to give a public ſpecimen of tranſacting church buſineſs. This ſhews us, that matters of public concernment to a church, are not to be ſmuggled through a ſeſſion, but conducted in the preſence, and by the conſent, of the whole brethren. Though, then, it affords not a precedent for one church to appeal to another, yet this portion of Scripture will, to the end of the world, be uſeful to direct us in tranſacting church buſineſs.

9. The deciſion of the church at Jeruſalem was the iſſue of the infallible interpretation of Scripture, and the voice of God in the previous converſion of the Gentiles. Peter argues, that if God had already given them converſion without circumciſion, the matter muſt be already determined, as they were really already ſaved when they were converted. If, then, circumciſion, or the Moſaic law, had been neceſſary, they muſt have received it before converſion He argues from their belief, that the Gentiles and themſelves ſhould be ſaved in the ſame manner, that is, wholly through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which could not be the caſe, if they muſt be circumciſed. James proves the ſame, by an inference from a paſſage of one of the prophets. Now, none can plead this as a precedent for any body of men to ſettle controverted matters for others, who cannot plead the gift of infallible interpretation of Scripture.

10. If the apoſtles preſumed not to give their deciſion, without giving ſuch reaſons, upon which it was

* See Innes's Reaſons, page 39.

founded, how arrogant are those assemblies, who make their own opinion of expediency the law of every individual! Were such assemblies of God's own appointing, yet, if their proceedings are not directed by the Scriptures; if they cannot plead the sanction of the Scriptures for every decision, their acts would be invalid. Let synods apply this criterion to their decrees, and it will at once sweep away all their *prudential regulations and human expedients*, and every act that cannot plead *express* Scripture. It will not be enough, that such a thing is the "*mind of this synod*," but that such a thing is the mind of Scripture, the voice of God.

11. No body of men can plead this as a precedent to determine in matters of religion for others, who cannot preface their decree with; "It seemed good unto us, and *to the Holy Ghost*." Without this, their decision is as invalid as an act of Parliament without the sanction of the king.

12. Whatever be the divine model of church government, it is in no measure invested with a power of legislation. The question of a right to make laws according to circumstances, for the government of Christ's church, and the inquiry into the divine form of its government, are entirely distinct. Whether episcopacy, presbytery, or independency be of God, to none of them can belong a right to enact new laws, any more than to promulgate new doctrines. The business of church rulers is not to make laws, but to execute the laws which they find enacted by Christ, in the New Testament. If an individual independent church, were to take upon itself to enact laws, draw up a plan of rules and regulations for their government, and worship, I would have the same objections to it, that I have to presbytery. To suppose a liberty to enact laws or regulations, according to the exigence of circumstances, is to arraign the competency of Christ, as the King of the church, and a declaration that he hath left the code of laws imperfect. Executive and legislative authori-

ty, even in civil affairs, are entirely diſtinct, and in the beſt governments are lodged in different hands. The parliament enacts laws, and the civil magiſtracy executes them. As well might the civil magiſtrates of a county meet to frame laws, in imitation of the parliament, as church rulers plead the right of making laws, becauſe the inſpired apoſtles of God did ſo. Church rulers are to execute the laws which the apoſtles enacted. Every new law is an act of treaſon againſt Chriſt, and an attempt to rob him of the moſt valuable prerogative of his crown. How aſtoniſhing is it to hear men arguing ſo warmly, that Chriſt would not leave his church without a form of government, who ſuppoſe that he has left it without a ſufficient code of laws! Surely it is as neceſſary to have divine laws for the government of Chriſt's church, as a divine plan of executing thoſe laws. If the laws are human, what avails it that the plan of government be agreeable to the Scripture model? Were we then to allow that the plan of church government, by ſynods, &c. &c. was the true one, ſtill their buſineſs would be very different from what it is. They would not meet as legiſlators, but as jurors, to judge of the *application* of Chriſt's laws. Suppoſe, for inſtance, that a member of their communion was charged with being an extortioner, a reviler, a drunkard, &c. there is an expreſs law of Chriſt, that he ſhould become a ſubject of diſcipline. Now, their buſineſs would be to judge the offender by the law of Chriſt, examine proofs, and determine whether or not the charge was fairly applicable. But it happens, that this rule is given to the brethren of an individual church, and not to a ſynod or preſbytery.

But the very idea of a right of legiſlation in the church of Chriſt, ſuppoſes infallibility in the legiſlators. To ſuppoſe that Chriſt would give a commiſſion to men, to make laws, and a command to his people to obey them, while at the ſame time, he would leave ſuch men without infallible direction, is monſtrouſly abſurd. If ſynods are fallible, they may enact ſinful laws, and enforce them in the awful name, and by the authority of

te Lord Jeſus Chriſt. If they are not infallible, why do they enforce their laws, as if they were infallible? Do they not enforce the ſmalleſt law they enact, with the ſame rigour they could do a law of God? Nay, it is very poſſible to break many of the laws of God with impunity, while a law of ſynod or preſbytery muſt be inviolable. If an individual approve not of any law, the only redreſs he has, is to ſeparate. He has no liberty to act upon his own convictions. Their opinion of expediency muſt be his guide. Now, if they are not infallibly right, why do they not leave individuals to act according to their own convictions? Is not this, to "teach for doctrines the commandments of men?"

Upon the whole, in the 15th chap. of Acts, we have no precedent for any foreign interference among the churches of Chriſt. The diſtinguiſhing features in this aſſembly, are not to be found, nor ever can be found, in any aſſembly on earth. If it be aſked, of what uſe is this relation to us, if it does not warrant us to decide differences in a ſimilar way, I would anſwer, that whenever a text of Scripture is ſo explained, as to be rendered uſeleſs to after-ages, I readily grant, that it certainly muſt be a forced explanation. But have we not here a precedent for appealing to the apoſtles, in all our controverſies, as the church of Antioch did? Have we not here a precedent of applying every doctrine, and *obſervance*, and *rite* and *regulation* of churches to the word of God? If the apoſtles drew their concluſions from this ſource, ſhall *human prudence*, and *expedience* direct church rulers? Every tittle muſt be brought "to the law and to the teſtimony; whoever ſpeaks not agreeable to this, it is becauſe there is no light in them." Have we not here an admirable model for the tranſaction of all church buſineſs. The queſtion could, indeed, only be determined by apoſtles; but as it was an affair in which the church at Jeruſalem was concerned, and to give us a living model for tranſacting church buſineſs, the apoſtles conſider the matter in conjunction with the whole church. What a beautiful picture does

it give us of a church meeting! It is not a miniſter and ſeſſion, nor the miniſters and lay elders of a diſtrict, but the apoſtles, elders or paſtors, and brethren. Whenever the paſtors and brethren of a particular church come together now, they muſt have the apoſtles in their hands, by whoſe writings they are to conduct all their affairs.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Office of Lay-Elders.

Having, in the laſt chapter, examined the pretenſions of preſbyterians, as founded on the relation contained in the 15th chapter of the Acts of the apoſtles, I intend, in this, to enquire into the validity of the office of lay-elders. Preſbyterians themſelves are not agreed, either as to the foundation, extent or prerogatives of this office; a circumſtance that will go far, in the judgment of every unprejudiced inquirer, to prove that the office is not ſcriptural. As to the ſcripture authority of lay-elders, ſome refer us to the office of deacon. "Though the name is not ſcriptural, (ſay they,) yet the office is." But here I would remark, that the names are not more different than the offices. A ſcripture deacon is an officer in the church of Chriſt, for managing its temporal concerns, and attending to the wants of the poor brethren. He has no concern in the ruling of the church, more than the reſt of the brethren. A lay-elder is compounded of a New Teſtament deacon, the half of a New Teſtament elder or paſtor, as he is a church ruler, and a part of the office of an apoſtle, as a legiſlator, to make laws for the church. In the ſuperior courts, he is looked upon by ſome as a repreſentative of the people; by others as the repreſentative of his own order. In either view,

his office is derived from our ideas of civil policy; for there is not the shadow of any such representation in the word of God. It is absurd in the extreme, to found his office on that of the Scripture deacon, seeing it extends so much farther. If he is the same as the deacon, let him do the deacon's office only. Besides, if he be the deacon, why has he been called elder? Has not the father the best right to give the name to the child? Is not the Spirit of him who instituted the office, the best judge of the most fitting name? Especially as the name was appropriated to another order in the church, why was *it* chosen? If men thought that they could give a more proper and decent name to this office, than the Spirit of God had done, which is not a very modest supposition, why did they take that which he had assigned to pastors? Has not the tendency of this been to mislead the English reader, and make him believe, that where he meets the word elder, in the New Testament, the presbyterian elder was intended, and not the pastor. This has been one of the most successful artifices of priestcraft in all ages. But there are others who pretend to find both name and office in the New Testament, and produce as their authority, 1 Tim. v. 17. "Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine." "Here (say they) is an evident distinction, between ruling and teaching elders. There must be some elders to rule, and others to teach." To this I answer,

1. Allowing the presbyterian explanation of this text, in its utmost latitude, what does it make? Granting that there should be a body of lay elders to join with the preaching elders, in ruling a church, does this give any countenance to a church session as a body of legislators, to make laws, rules, and regulations for the congregation? Their being church rulers, does not constitute them church legislators. Upon this supposition, their business would be to carry the laws of Christ into effect, not to make laws. Neither would this give any countenance to a minister and session, exclusively judg-

ing of the application of discipline, and engrossing the whole power of the church into their own hands. Whether the elders of a particular church be all pastors, or some ruling, and others teaching elders, to neither would belong the sole right of judging when the laws of Christ were to be applied. If a brother was accused, the whole church would judge him according to the law of Christ; and if he is found guilty, the business of church rulers is to execute the law of Christ, which the church has judged applicable; just as a judge pronounces the verdict found by the jury. But a church session is not only a parliament to make laws, but a jury to judge of the application of both their own and Christ's laws. The brethren are entirely excluded. They may lodge a complaint, or appear as a witness, but in judging of the guilt or innocence of the accused, they have no share. I do not stay here to shew that this is contrary to the apostolical commands, in which the whole church is intrusted and charged with judging of the application of discipline. This I intend to shew in another place. What I would observe here, is, that according to their own interpretation of this text, there is no foundation, for the legislative or exclusive judicial authority of church sessions.

2. Allowing, from this text, an order of ruling elders, distinct from teaching elders, this gives no countenance to a body of what are called lay-elders: that is, men not invested with the pastoral office. Such ruling elders would be as really pastors, bishops, ministers, &c. as the preaching elders. The office of a preaching elder would not be superior to that of the ruling elder The ruling elder would be a pastor of the church, invested with the pastoral character, in as full a manner as the preaching elder. The only legitimate conclusion that could be drawn from this interpretation, would be, that in every church there should be two orders of ministers, the one for ruling, and the other for preaching; and that neither of these had a right to interfere in the department of the other. The preaching elder was not to rule, any more than the ruling el-

der was to preach. The preaching elder, then, ſhould not preſide in the ſeſſion, nay, he ſhould have no ſeat in it, any more than the ruling elder ſhould have in the pulpit. If the one is only to rule, the other is only to preach. If the one muſt not mount the pulpit, neither muſt the other ſit in church court. All then that can be fairly inferred from this interpretation, is, that in the paſtoral office, there are two diſtinct departments, which ſhould not interfere with each other; that thoſe appointed to rule, ſhould rule; and thoſe appointed to preach, ſhould preach; which inſtead of ſerving would overthrow, from the foundation, the whole preſbyterian ſyſtem. If, then, we ſhould allow that there is in this text, an order of ruling elders, diſtinct from another order of preaching elders, ſtill ſuch ruling elders would be paſtors or biſhops, and nothing akin to preſbyterian elders. Nay, the ruling elders would be more eminently, if not excluſively, the biſhops or overſeers. Overſight ſurely belongs rather to the ruler, than the preacher.

3. Is it poſſible that two orders ſo different as that of miniſters and lay-elders, ſhould be called invariably in Scripture, by the ſame name? is this like the perſpicuity of the Bible? Is it probable, that when the New Teſtament writers employ ſo many words to denote the ſame office, as biſhop, preſbyter, ſhepherd, &c. they could not afford a diſtinct name for the office of lay elder if it was apoſtolical? Is this agreeable to the uſe of any language, upon any ſubject? Eſpecially, is it agreeable to the genius of the philoſophic language of Greece, where every ſhade of difference in idea, is marked by a different word, expreſſive of it? But the Engliſh reader of the moſt common underſtanding muſt be convinced that it is impoſſible for the Greek word προεστῶτες to denote two ſo widely different officers from the uſe of our own word elder. Though this is the exact tranſlation of the Greek word, and in the eſtimation of preſbyterians muſt include both miniſter and lay-elder, yet to avoid confuſion, it has been appropriated by them to denote the latter only. What preſbyterian ſpeaks

promiſcuouſly of miniſters and lay-elders by the common name elders? Or who would underſtand him if he did? Yet ſuch undefined, indetermined language, they ſcruple not to put into the mouth of the Holy Ghoſt. If ever they uſe the word elder to denote the miniſter, they are obliged to prefix the word *lay* to it, when attributed to the preſbyterian elder, to prevent obſcurity. Now, if we cannot talk in Engliſh of miniſters and preſbyterian elders by the ſame name, is it poſſible that the Scriptures ſhould be guilty of this obſcurity?

4. Granting that this text does conſtitute two orders of elders, then there will be three orders of officers in every church, and the preſbyterians want the third. They have not the deacon. "Yes, (ſay they), our elder is the deacon." But upon what authority do they combine offices, which the apoſtles kept diſtinct. There is inconteſtibly an order of deacons; if there be two orders of elders, there ſhould be three diſtinct orders in every church. No man hath authority to combine any two of them into one, any more than to make a new order over the reſt. If it be ſaid, that the office of the lay elder and that of the deacon are the ſame, I have already ſhewn that they are widely different. The office of the deacon is to take care of the poor; whereas, if there be a diſtinct order of ruling elders, their office muſt be to rule the church. Is there any evidence in Scripture, that theſe two offices were combined into one? The office of the deacon is in itſelf no more connected with ruling, than with preaching. To rule in the church, and to take charge of the poor, are offices diſtinct in themſelves, and ſeparated in the New Teſtament.

5. If there had been two orders of elders, ſo diſtinct as that of lay and preaching elders, is it poſſible that their offices and qualifications ſhould be included in the ſame deſcription? In deſcribing the office of the elder, and his qualifications, no notice is taken of two orders, one as requiring a different kind of qualifica-

tions from the other. They are called upon, without exception, to feed the flock, take the overſight of it, &c.; and are all required to be διδακτικος, "fit to teach," which, as Dr. Campbell has obſerved, could hardly be the caſe, if ſome of them were to have no concern in teaching. This candid inquirer has given up this text, and thinks it is too trivial a circumſtance, upon which to found ſo material a diſtinction. It is not ſaid, that a preaching elder muſt have ſuch and ſuch qualifications, and do ſo and ſo, but *the elder*, which muſt include every diſtinction of elders. Beſides, the words elder and biſhop are perfectly interchangeable, conſtantly applied to the ſame officers, as all preſbyterians will allow. Now, if there be an order of lay elders, there muſt be alſo an order of lay-biſhops; that is, *men who have the paſtoral office, yet are not paſtors.*

6. Commentators ſeem generally agreed, and the 18th verſe abſolutely requires that τιμη here tranſlated "honour," ſignifies the *honourable mintenance of the miniſters of the goſpel.* The apoſtle proves that they are worthy of this τιμη from the law of Moſes reſpecting the ox employed in treading out the corn, and from the words of our Lord, with reſpect to thoſe engaged in preaching his word. Now, the argument drawn from this, goes directly to ſhew that all thoſe elders, ſpoken of in the 17th verſe, are worthy of honourable ſupport. It does not indeed require that a church is in every ſituation to ſupport all its labourers. Some may not need it; the church may be ſo poor that it cannot ſupport more than one paſtor. There is nothing to prevent it from uſing the labours of ſome who ſupport themſelves by lawful induſtry. But the text undoubtedly implies, that all elders are *worthy* of ſupport, and if they need, and the church can give it, it is their right. Do preſbyterians think it their duty to ſupport their elders, or will any one ſay, that they are worthy of it? If not, they cannot be the elders of which the apoſtle ſpeaks. Beſides, the 18th verſe proves inconteſtibly, that all the elders ſpoken of in the 17th verſe, have the ſame paſ-

toral character, and are employed in the same work. They are all "treaders out of the corn," all "labourers worthy of reward." How do presbyterian elders "tread out the corn?" In what manner do the most conscientious of them labour so as to be worthy of reward? These figures represent the elders as labouring constantly in the work of the gospel, and having that for their employment as the ox was daily employed in early days, and till the present time in some countries, in "treading out the corn," and as a labourer is employed, not occasionally, but constantly in his labour. Should it be said, that the illustration in the 18th verse is applicable only to the latter part of the 17th verse, I answer, that beside the necessity of referring it to the whole verse, the texts quoted by the apostle, would not be relevant in that view. They go to prove the propriety of support in general, and not a superiority of support.

7. Hitherto I have granted, that this text does create two orders of elders; and even on that supposition, have shewn that this constitutes two different orders of pastors in every church, not a separate order of what are called lay-elders. I will now endeavour to shew, that the text neither proves nor admits a distinction of order among the elders spoken of. The opposition is not between ruling elders and preaching elders, but in the first part of the verse, between those who discharge the office well *in general*, and those who are particularly employed and distinguished for talents and labour in that difficult, important, and laborious branch of the office, the preaching continually to large public assemblies. In every apostolical church, that was prefectly organized, there was a plurality of elders or pastors, of different gifts. Some were distinguished as public speakers, others as church rulers, others for a talent of private exhortation, peculiarly fitted to converse with the saints, on the state of their souls, and to pour the balm of consolation into the wounded spirit. Now, each of these sustained the whole of the pastoral office or character, and might occasionally be employed in any part of it, while each was usually

employed in that department of his office, for which his talents, and his temper, fitted him. The advantages which would thus accrue to the church, are obvious and admirable. It enjoyed this diverſity of gifts, while at the ſame time, if any of the elders were abſent or ſhould die, or that it could not procure, or ſupport for ſome time, as many elders or paſtors as were neceſſary, any one of them could officiate in the peculiar department of any other. Churches which have not this plurality of paſtors, and diverſity of gifts, are not aware of the diſadvantage under which they labour. At the ſame time, ſome congregations which have a plurality of paſtors, do not ſeem to know how to uſe them. They do not aſſign their paſtors, each the peculiar province for which he is beſt qualified, but each ſtatedly labours in every part of the office, alternately. This plurality of elders, is rather ſuited to the indolence of the labourer, than the edification of the church. This being the caſe, the reaſon of the injunction of the text is obvious and important. All ſuch elders are worthy of "honourable maintenance:" thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed in their office, have a right to a double portion; eſpecially thoſe who are peculiarly and uſually employed in preaching. This requires peculiar, and perhaps rarer talents; much more time, ſtudy, and expence to qualify them for the office; has much greater labour and fatigue; incurs more expence, by frequent excurſions: expoſes much more to public cenſure and odium; and requires much more intenſe application to furniſh the mind, ſo as to be a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. To diſcharge this part of the office in a proper manner, requires a life ſolely devoted to it. Such is my view of this text; now to confirm it.

The word tranſlated *rule*, is by no means excluſively applicable to that department of the paſtoral office called ruling. Ηγουμενος is rather a commander * in the field

* As the word *imperator*, from ſignifying a military came to ſignify a civil officer, ſo this word is uſually employed for a governor or magiſtrate.

than a president in an assembly. Προεδρος would be the most proper word for the latter. Accordingly, in the Athenian council of 500, the seven of the Prytanes chosen by lot to preside every week were called προεδροι; and the president of the day was called επιστατης. This is a too peaceful and inactive office to give a name to Christ's officers. I know not that they are ever so called in the New Testament, though they early assumed this title. But προιστος is a word which fully expresses their arduous, dangerous, and honourable office. It signifies an officer who goes before his men, and stands in the front of the battle. He encourages them by his example and exhortations, and leads them into action. Officers have the command and the care of the army; train and discipline the soldiers; and keep them to their duty. They take care to supply them with provisions, and prepare them for battle, by military speeches. Such an officer is the elder in the church of Christ. Like a military officer, he trains and disciplines his troops; supplies them with wholesome provisions; rules them by the laws of Christ; instructs them in the will of their king; and prepares them for battle by his public preaching. I apprehend, then, that the word προιστωτες here, is not to be referred exclusively, to any one part of the pastoral office, but to the office in general. It means the elders who discharge in an eminent manner, the duty of an officer in the army of Christ, and preaching is as essential a part of this, as ruling. That προιστως refers to the office in general, is farther evident, from 1 Thess. v. 12. where the same persons who are said to labour among them, and to admonish them, are called also προισταμενους. Indeed I am astonished that any person who has ever looked into the Greek Testament should think that the προιστωτες were an order inferior to preachers. There is not a higher word to denote pastor, in all the word of God. They are Christ's military officers. Accordingly they are called also, Heb. xiii. 17. ηγουμενοι or military leaders. —Agreeably to this we find, that when one of the elders began to be distinguished above his colleagues, he assumed these very appellations as the most honourable.

He exclusively appropriated to himself, πρεσβυς and ηγεμενος as well as επισκοπος or bishop. But especially, can there be any thing more unfit to the character of military officers, than an order of lay-elders?

My sense of the passage may be illustrated by a simile. "Let the kings who rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially those who distinguish themselves as the protectors of religious liberty." Here ruling well, refers to the whole kingly office, and the word "especially," distinguishes a particular department of the duty of a king. "Let virtuous and distinguished legislators, be esteemed worthy of double honour, especially those who labour for the abolition of the slave trade." Who would infer from this, that members of parliament were each confined to a particular department? Each member has a right to speak and vote upon every subject, though his time and talents may be chiefly employed on his favourite object.

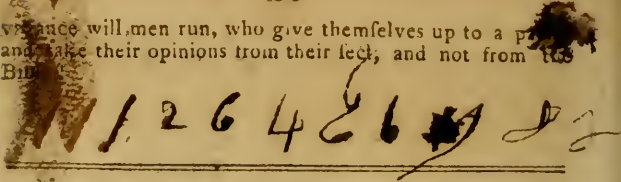
Besides, if I am not greatly mistaken, grammar requires that οι κοπιωντες have πρεσβυτερους πρεσβυτερους, and not merely πρεσβυτερους, for its antecedent. The phraseology is οι καλως προεστωτες πρεσβυτερους, and not οι πρεσβυτεροι οι καλως προεστωτες. But common sense requires that the πρεσβυτερους include the κοπιωντες εν λογω και διδασκαλια. If a general, after a victory would write thus to the secretary at war. "The officers merit the highest praise, especially the general officers," he would write sense. But how ridiculous would it be to say, "the subaltern officers merit the highest praise, especially the general officers." In the first instance, the word "officers" includes the general officers, but in the second the general officers are not included among the subaltern officers. Now, this is exactly what the presbyterian interpretation of this text makes the apostles say, "Let ruling elders be counted worthy of honour, especially the preaching elders." Μαλιστα is properly used, when a part is distinguished out of the whole; or one out of a number.

Compare this paſſage with 2 Tim. iv. 13. "Bring with you the cloak, and the books, eſpecially the parchments." Here, the generic word *books* includes the parchments, as a particular ſort of the books which he had deſired him to bring. But how ridiculous would it have been to have ſaid, "Bring the cloak, eſpecially the parchments."

Thus have I examined the meaning of this much diſputed portion of ſcripture. I have firſt endeavoured to ſhew, that granting preſbyterians their own interpretation of this text, and that it fully eſtabliſhes an order of lay-elders, or an order of rulers in the church, who are not paſtors, that even this did not give a church ſeſſion any authority to judge in all matters for the church or congregation. Even in this caſe, the whole church ſhould judge, and thoſe officers carry the reſult into execution. Again, that granting the excluſive management of church affairs to the ſeſſion, gave it no authority to legiſlate, as the whole church, or the united voice of all the churches upon earth, have no right to make the ſlighteſt alteration, amendment, or addition with reſpect to the laws of Chriſt's church. Further that granting a diſtinction of order in elders to be eſtabliſhed from this verſe, it would make two orders of paſtors, and not a diſtinct order of lay-elders. And, laſtly, that a diſtinction of order of any kind, is neither neceſſary, probable, nor poſſible, from this verſe. It conſtitutes, indeed, a plurality of paſtors, in every perfectly organized church, who, being of different gifts, ſhould be uſually employed in the department beſt ſuited to each; that there ſhould be a gradation of ſupport according to talents, zeal, and diligence: and that the higheſt is due to thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed *for labouring in word and doctrine*. This plurality of elders or paſtors in a church, is called (1 Tim. iv. 14) the preſbytery or elderſhip. The modern ſignification of the word preſbytery, as conſiſting of the miniſters and repreſentative lay-elders of the congregations of a whole diſtrict, is not known in ſcripture, nor in all the firſt ages of Chriſtianity.*

* Chryſoſtom ſuppoſed the preſbytery ſpoken of, 1 Tim. iv. 14, to have been a ſynod of biſhops. To what extra-

vegance will men run, who give themselves up to a p[illegible] and take their opinions from their sect, and not from the Bi[illegible]



CHAPTER VI.

OF INDEPENDENCY.

I HAVE an objection against imposing names of *human invention* upon *the things of the Spirit*. When I use the words independency and independents, for that form of church government, instituted by the apostles, and those who now embrace it, I would be understood to do it, not of choice, but of necessity. The disciples of Christ are properly called *Christians*, *saints*, or *brethren*, and an assembly of those, for the purpose of enjoying the ordinances of Christ, according to his appointment, is called a *church*. Now, these are the words I would always wish to use to denote the same objects; but it has happened that some of them have been so abused and prostituted to other significations, that it is impossible to use these plain scripture words without obscurity. There is now the church of Rome,' the church of England, the church of Scotland, the church of Secession, &c. &c. &c. In speaking therefore of a church formed on the model of the apostolical churches, we are obliged to call it an *independent* church, to distinguish it from the others, which have usurped the name. Still, however, we use this, not as the name of Christ's church, but of the particular mode of the government of an apostolical church, to mark its distinctive feature. The apostles had no occasion to use this, or any other word of the same nature, for the same purpose, because no different form of government had been erected. It is obvious,

then, that this use of the word *independency*, is very different from sacrament, eucharist, altar, clergy, and a multitude of other such names, which the wisdom of men has imposed upon the ordinances of God.

That the government of Christ's appointment, is what is called independent, is obvious from the rule which he gave for the settling of private offences among his disciples. Matt. xviii. 15,—18. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his "fault, between thee and him alone: if he shall hear "thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will "not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, "that in the mouth of one or two witnesses, every word "may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear "them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to "hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen "man, and a publican." Here the last appeal is to the church. He does not say, if he does not hear the church, take him to the presbytery, and if he does not hear the presbytery, take him to the synod, &c. but if he hear not the church, "let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican." I know, indeed, that various subterfuges have been invented to evade the force of this plain scripture. Every sect has attempted to find its own discipline in this passage, whilst individuals, to apologize for what they cannot justify, have attempted to darken its meaning so as to make it of no practical use. The multiplicity of interpretations, in the opinion of Dr. Stillingfleet, is an argument to prove that it is totally inexplicable; in my opinion it proves only what is proved by the variety of sentiments on every other point in scripture, the perversity, the selfishness, or the prejudice of professing Christians. What! has the Lord Jesus given a precept, in a case of such importance, and of such frequent occurrence, which cannot be understood? Did he wish to be, or could he not avoid being unintelligible? Must the Holy One of Israel speak with the darkness and evasion of an heathen oracle? If he did not mean to be understood, why did he speak? if he meant to be understood, why did he not speak in intel-

ligible language? If we cannot find out who are the divinely appointed arbitrators of our differences, he might as well have said nothing on the subject. What an insult upon the Holy Ghost to represent his language to be so vague and indeterminate, that it cannot be understood? Christ has said, "tell it to the church;" is there no way of coming at his meaning? Has the word *church* no determinate meaning in the New Testament? But Dr. Stillingfleet is of opinion, that if the discipline Christ has appointed, be executed, it is not material by whom. Is it then the same thing, whether a law be enacted by the lawfully appointed legislators, or by any other body of self constituted men? or that a criminal be tried by a lawful judge and jury, or by men who assume the right of judgment, without the countenance of lawful authority? If Christ has appointed any particular referees, it is as really a breach of his injunction to appoint any other, as it would be totally to neglect that instance of discipline. But is there any native necessary obscurity in the precept, arising from the promiscuous use of the word *church*, in the New Testament? If it is now in any measure obscure, it has been rendered so, not from the ambiguity of the scripture use of the word, but from its prostituted application in modern acceptation, and the sophistry, and subtleties of interested, prejudiced, or bigotted men: we find no difficulty in the passage until we hear the forced explanations of it given by controvertists, and our mind begins to be distracted, and the subject obscured by the smoke of their unhallowed fires.

I lay it down, then, as an axiom, that Christ meant some *determinate thing* by the word *church*, and that there must be sufficient evidence in the New Testament to lead the humble, teachable inquirer into that meaning. Christ must have spoken intelligible language. Now, to investigate the scripture-use of the word *church*.

In every language there are two different processes recognised, which affect the signification of words, appro-

priation and extenſion. The one confines them to a part of their original territories, the other extends them a little beyond their natural limits. This is not peculiar to the language of ſcripture, but is practiſed in treating of all the arts and ſciences, and the whole buſineſs of life. Thus the word angel literally ſignifies a meſſenger, and is not naturally confined to any deſcription of meſſengers. But the Bible hath in a manner appropriated that word to denote an order of beings, whoſe employment is that of meſſengers of the Moſt High, ſent forth to miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation. And though it may occaſionally, even in ſcripture, claim its natural rights, being ſometimes uſed for other meſſengers, yet it is the *appropriated name* of that order of beings called angels. The ſame may be ſaid of the words *apoſtle*, *elder*, *biſhop*, &c. ſometimes they are appropriated upon particular ſubjects or departments, while they enjoy the full extent of their ſignification upon others; and ſometimes the ſame word is differently appropriated upon different ſubjects. Thus, while the words angel, apoſtle, &c. are uſually confined to a particular province in ſcripture, they have unbounded licence in profane authors of the ſame date; and thus when men uſe the word miniſter, converſing upon political ſubjects, it is immediately underſtood that they mean the firſt miniſter of ſtate. But if they are converſing on religion, it is as readily underſtood to be *the miniſter of the congregation*. On the other hand, ſometimes a word will come through time to exceed its natural boundaries, and be extended to include ideas not neceſſarily, nor naturally inherent in it. Thus, χειροτονεω literally ſignifies to vote by holding up the hand, and was uſed in the popular aſſemblies of Athens in contradiſtinction to the vote by ſcrutiny, which was denoted by ψηφιζω from ψηφος the pebble uſed by the voters. But in an advanced period of the hiſtory of this word, we find that it ſometimes dropped the principal idea altogether, and was extended to denote election in any manner, and even the conferring of an office, not by election but individual nomination. Our language has recogniſed the ſame abuſive principle, in the words man-

midwife, head-pleurisy, &c. Now, to apply this reasoning to the point in dispute. We are to enquire what εκκλησια literally signifies; what it was originally applied to; what it came to be applied to in the process of its history; what is its use in other instances in Scripture; how it is used in profane authors of the same date; whether in the New Testament, it hath been appropriated, or extended; and if appropriated, to what? Proceeding thus, we shall find, that in the New Testament it is invariably used, either for an individual congregation, or the whole community of Christians.

Εκκλησια literally signifies an assembly *called out* from others, and is used among the Greeks, particularly the Athenians, for their popular assemblies summoned by their chief magistrate, and in which none but *citizens* had a right to sit. By inherent power it may be applied to any body of men *called out*, and *assembled in one place*. If ever it loses the ideas of *calling out* and *assembling*, it loses its principal features, and its primitive use. I will not say, that by the operation of the abusive principle I have described, it might not have come to lose even both, after a length of time from its first introduction; but this I say, that I no where find it in profane writers, nor in the scriptures speaking of civil affairs, to have lost either, but especially the latter. Nor will I be driven from my position by the use of this word in the 19th chapter of Acts. That assembly, however tumultuous, irregular, and unlawful it may have been, was a *meeting of the citizens called together* by the silversmiths. The craftsmen were *called together*, (verse 25,) by Demetrius, who, inflamed by his speech, burst out into intemperate acclamations to their goddess Diana. The rest of the cirizens were roused and assembled by their noise, and adopting their zeal, though many of them knew not the cause, they rushed into the theatre—the very place of public deliberation. Though, then, it was an irregular, lawless assembly, it was nothing a-kin to an English mob, but rather like a parliament assembling being summoned, not by the king but by some incendiary among themselves. Still more

ſtrongly may it be affirmed, that it is no where uſed by profane writers to denote any body of men, but in their *aſſembled* capacity they are called, εκκλησια only as *aſſembled*.

Such being the origin and uſe of this word among the Greeks, to what may it be legitimately applied when uſed in ſacred things? It may ſignify any *aſſembly called out* from the world, and *united in Chriſt*. Agreeably to this, whenever it is uſed in Scripture in a ſacred ſenſe, that is, as applicable to believers, we find that it is invariably appropriated to an individual aſſembly of Chriſtians, meeting to enjoy the ordinances of Chriſt, or the Chriſtian community in general. Whenever the apoſtles made a number of converts in any place, they ſeparated them from the congregation, by forming them into an εκκλησια or church. And juſt as in the Athenian aſſemblies none but citizens could ſit or vote, ſo none but the citizens of the new Jeruſalem were allowed to join themſelves to this company. As in the parliament many may be preſent to hear, though none but ſenators ſpeak or vote; ſo in a church of Chriſt, many are preſent to hear the goſpel of ſalvation, but none are admitted as members of the εκκλησια but thoſe who are firſt by that goſpel make citizens of heaven. But with equal propriety may this word be applied either to all the Chriſtians on earth, or all both in heaven and earth, as aſſembled in Jeſus. Nor does this application ſtretch it a whit beyond its natural and intrinſic meaning. It is as literally and as truly applied to the one as to the other. All the ſaints on earth, all the ſaints in heaven, are aſſembled in him, as really as the branches of a vine are united in the trunk, the ſtones of a building upon the foundation, or the members of the body with the head. With the ſtricteſt truth all Chriſtians may be ſaid to be already "in heavenly places in Chriſt." This double application of the word is neither foreign nor forced, incorrect nor indiſtinct. When it is uſed indefinitely, it applies to the community of believers aſſembled in Chriſt: when it is uſed with reſpect to an individual church, which is its moſt general application, the context, or the nature

of the circumſtances, gives ſufficient intimation. Let any one take the trouble to run over all the places where it is found in the New Teſtament, and I will be bold to ſay, he will not find a ſingle text, which will not fairly explain on this hypotheſis. The caſes where it may occur in the civil or unappropriated ſenſe, are not accompanied with the ſmalleſt difficulty, the context, or a note of appropriation, as "church of Chriſt," &c. ſufficiently marking the difference Thoſe who, from this circumſtance, would argue the impoſſibility of aſcertaining the meaning of the word church in Mat. xviii. 17. and elſewhere, will find the ſame difficulty in the words apoſtles, angel. and innumerable others. Indeed the admiſſion of this principle, and I ſee it admitted, and acted upon, by ſome very ingenious men, would involve, in impenetrable darkneſs, the cleareſt point in theology. If it be maintained, that the meaning of a word ſo important, ſo frequently uſed in the epiſtles, could not be aſcertained, why ſhould not this be the caſe with others? Were ſuch a principle eſtabliſhed in criticiſm, I have no heſitation in ſaying, that there is not an ancient author could be underſtood; that there is not a paſſage ſo clear in any author, in any language, upon any ſubject, which could not be ſo perplexed by the ingenuity of a ſophiſt, that the ableſt critic could not unravel it. Critics would be aſhamed to reaſon thus on a paſſage in Homer or Sophocles. Grant only to the inſpired writers, what will be granted to all —that they had a meaning in their words, and wrote to be underſtood, and it will be our fault if we cannot underſtand them.

Having ſtated the literal meaning, the profane and ſacred application of the word εκκλησια let us next examine the claims of its modern * acceptations. It is quite a cameleon. It is as various in its meaning, as the neceſſities of each party require. Sometimes it is a church ſeſſion: ſometimes an individual church; ſometimes a claſſical preſbytery; ſometimes a ſynod, ſometimes a general aſſembly; ſometimes church rulers;

* I call them modern, becauſe they are later than the New Teſtament.

sometimes all the churches of a province or kingdom. Truly, if the Scripture gives ground for all these, it is more dark and perplexing than was ever an answer of the Sybil. Is not the bare statement a refutation of the fact? and the supposition a calumny on the oracles of God? But the practice of presbyterians themselves, is a complete refutation of this hypothesis. They do not speak promiscuously of all their assemblies by the name church, but have a distinct name for each, as the congregation, the session, the presbytery, the synod, &c. Now, if each order of these courts be a church, as well as each congregation, and the collective congregations, why do they not speak of them by the scripture name? Why have they imposed upon them names of their own invention? Evidently because they would otherwise be unintelligible. If one of their writers on church discipline was to speak of all their assemblies by the name church, without additional marks of distinction, his readers would not understand him: yet this is the very inaccuracy they charge upon the writers of the New Testament. They suppose them to speak promiscuously of the greatest variety of subordinate courts, as well as assemblies of a different nature, by the same name, without any mark of distinction to guide the reader. Now, I think this is a very fair criterion; scripture ordinances should be sufficiently intelligible by scripture names, without the use of any other. I believe it will be found a very just conclusion, *that the institutions which have not a name in scripture, have not an existence in scripture.* Let presbyterians, then, use nothing but the Scripture names, and their doctrine of subordinate courts will be jargon. By their unnatural extension of this word, they have taken it in modern use from that which alone deserves it—the individual assemblies of the saints. Let us suppose, then, that εκκλησια might have been legitimately appropriated to denote any one of these assemblies, this appropriation will take it from all the rest. If a session is a church, then a congregation cannot be a church; if either of these be a church, then a presbytery cannot, without confusion, be usually so denominated; and if a presbytery is a church, then it will take that name from all inferior and superior courts. Now,

if theſe courts be ſcriptural, let their advocates produce their diſtinct ſcriptural names. No word can have two appropriate meanings upon the ſame ſubject; εκκλησια may be a civil aſſembly and appropriated alſo to a religious aſſembly; but in neither civil nor religious matters can it be appropriated as the diſtinctive name of two different aſſemblies, the one ſubordinate to the other. It may denote a particular aſſembly of ſaints, and the community of Chriſtians aſſembled in Jeſus; but without confuſion, it cannot be uſed as the appropriated name of a particular and general aſſembly of the ſame ſort. This is clear from the names of civil courts. Though ſome of theſe be ſuch as to be literally applicable to all, yet they are not ſo appropriated. Thus ſeſſions, aſſizes, &c. Thus alſo in the church of England, though each of the orders are called clergymen, yet for this very reaſon it could not be the appropriated diſtinctive name of any one of them. There is curate, rector, biſhop, &c. For the ſame reaſon, though *biſhop* was the common name of all preſbyters originally, yet when it was appropriated to one of the number, it was taken from all the reſt. If, then, the word church be generally applicable to ſuch a variety of aſſemblies, each aſſembly muſt have a diſtinctive name beſides; to produce which out of Scripture, will be rather an arduous taſk. Beſides, in ſpeaking particularly of each of theſe aſſemblies, the common name could not be uſed, any more than the name clergyman would diſtinguiſh a biſhop from a preſbyter. When our Lord ſays, then "tell it to the church;" if he intends preſbyterian eccleſiaſtical courts, to which does he refer? If to the ſeſſion, then all higher appeals are cut off; for if the offending brother will not "hear the church, let him be as an heathen man and a publican:" if it means a general ſynod or aſſembly, then all inferior courts are cut off. But if *church* be alſo the ſcripture name of an individual aſſembly of ſaints, conſiſting of paſtors and church members, is not the obſcurity ſtill increaſed. Whether muſt the congregation or the ſeſſion be appealed to?

I have hitherto combated this multifarious application of the word, upon the ſuppoſition that it was equal-

ly proper to any one of the things signified. But I have objections against the propriety of applying it either to church rulers, or the associated churches of a province or kingdom, both from the meaning of the word and its original application, as well as its use in Scripture. According to the intrinsic ideas contained in εκκλησια the churches of a province or kingdom could not be so called, because they are never assembled. Now this would be *an assembly, never assembled.* Should it be said that they are present in their representatives, as the nation may be said to be present in the parliament, (besides that this is too figurative for a distinctive or appropriated name.) then private individuals can no more be called members of the church of Scotland, &c. than private subjects members of parliament. None are members of an assembly, but those actually possessing a right to sit in that assembly. A national or provincial church, in this view, consists of church rulers alone, or rather a selection of church rulers. Besides, church is used in scripture, according to its literal signification, for an assembly of saints *actually* assembled; it would not therefore be used in such a loose sense in the first stages of its history. Words may come to lose their leading idea, but it is always by the operation of time and change of circumstances. Add to this, that the Greeks did not use it for representative assemblies; but assemblies in which all the citizens had a right to be present. None were represented but the members who composed the assembly. Children, females, and slaves were not represented. This last objection lies equally against church rulers being at any time exclusively called *the church.* Εκκλησια was a popular assembly, distinguished from συνκλησια an assembly of nobles or senators. It seems very clear that this latter would be the most appropriate name for a court of church rulers: I freely acknowledge, that the literal ideas contained in the word εκκλησια might be applicable to a court of church rulers, but it would be upon a principle different from its usual application among the Athenians, as well as its other acknowledged applications in Scripture. A church of Christ is so called, because it consists of members called and separated from the world

by the gospel of Christ, and united in the enjoyment of his ordinances. But if a court of church rulers were so called, it would be not because they were called out of the world, and united in the service of Christ, but called out from their brethren to legislate for, and govern them. Now such a use of the word would be nothing akin to the other. They would not be the same word, though composed of the same letters. Between the particular and general use of the word church, the leading ideas are common; both are called out of the world by the gospel, separated from it, and assembled in Christ But between these and the word as signifying church rulers, there is no resemolance. To appropriate a word for a double purpose upon the same subject, by a process so different, is altogether unexampled. Neither is this agreeable to the principle that generally operates in language, to extend and diversify the signification of words. They are usually correctly and ambiguously applied at first; variety of signification grows by abuse and time, as a fact related by many individuals will be known in different countries, with a loss or addition of circumstances. Add to this, that in a new science or art, when an author is obliged to borrow and appropriate a word, he doth so generally agreeably to its natural import and approved use in the language from which it is taken. If, then, our Lord had taken εκκλησια to denote an individual assembly of saints, he would have taken συνκλησια for a court of church rulers, if he had instituted such a court.

But what saith the scripture? This must finally decide the pretensions of these different claimants. Is there a single passage in which this word must be acknowledged to have any of those significations I combat? Does it occur in any place where it plainly refers to a court of church rulers, or to a number of churches under an associated government? Are not all the passages in which it is said to be so used as undecided as the present? Upon what principle, then of fair criticism can it be argued? If they could produce any one occurrence of it, in which it must incontestibly be so un-

derſtood, there might be ſome colour of ground ſo to underſtand it in others, though uſed with leſs perſpicuity. But without an acknowledged foundation, they never can raiſe a ſuperſtructure. If the word *church* was in any one place explained to be a repreſentative aſſembly, and an aſſociation of the churches of a kingdom, they might plead ſuch a ſenſe here with efficacy. But if it is never ſo explained, never can it be ſo interpreted here. On the other hand, we can produce texts innumerable, where it ſignifies an individual aſſembly of ſaints, and in which our opponents muſt and do acknowledge that it hath ſuch a ſignification. We can produce a number of paſſages in which a church of Chriſt is explained to conſiſt of the ſaints of a particular church. By what authority, then, can they refuſe it to have ſuch a ſignification here? There is not the leaſt intimation in any part of the New Teſtament of a repreſentative government. Nothing is ſaid about a number of church rulers being ſelected as an eccleſiaſtical council over a number of individual churches; nor any ſuch uſe of the word church, as including a number of individual churches. When the inſpired writers ſpeak of a ſingle aſſembly of ſaints, they invariably call it a church: when they ſpeak of a number of churches, or the churches of a province or diſtrict, they do not call them a church, but churches. Thus when Paul writes to the Corinthians, he addreſſes the "*church* of God which is at Corinth:" but when he writes to the Galatians, he addreſſes *the churches* of Galatia. Thus alſo when the church of Jeruſalem is ſpoken of, it is called *a church;* but when the aggregate of the individual churches of Judea and Samaria are ſpoken of, they are not called the church of Judea, or the church of Samaria, but the *churches* of Judea, and the *churches* of Samaria. Thus alſo *the church* of Cenchrea, (Rom. xvi. 1.) and the *churches* of Achaia: the *church* of Epheſus, the *church* of Smyrna, &c. But when they are ſpoken of in the aggregate, it is the ſeven *churches* of Aſia, not the *church* of Aſia, Rev. i. 4. and ii. 1. &c. I know indeed that with reſpect to Jeruſalem and Corinth, it is alleged that the ſaints in thoſe cities muſt have been too numerous to have aſſembled in one place. But I need

not take up my time in ſhewing how or where they might aſſemble, or in aſcertaining their numbers. They are not more numerous then I wiſh them to have been; and the ſcripture itſelf refutes the objection in both inſtances. Acts ii. 44. 1 Cor. v. 4. and xi. 18. In theſe paſſages they are expreſsly ſhewn to have met in the ſame place.

But if there were really any ambiguity in Mat. xviii. 17. can there be a better way of aſcertaining truth than by referring to the uſe of it in the writings of the New Teſtament of a later date, thus comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual? Can there be a better commentary on the goſpels, than the epiſtles? If any thing is not fully explained, but hinted at, by Chriſt, where will we go for farther information, but to the apoſtles, who were to finiſh the revelation he had begun, and fully illuſtrate, what may be ſaid to lie in embryo in his words? Can any thing then be a clearer commentary on Mat. xviii. 17. if it needed any, than 1 Cor. vi. 1.—where Paul ſpeaks of another ſimilar caſe of diſcipline? Can it be ſuppoſed that the apoſtle would inſtitute one way of terminating diſputes, and his Maſter another? The apoſtle makes the *ſaints* of an *individual church* at Corinth, the arbiters of civil diſputes. Would he have done ſo if his Lord had referred perſonal diſputes to the cognizance of an eccleſiaſtical council? No man will ſay ſo.

The ingenious Dr. Campbell, who, in his Lectures on church hiſtory, has treated this ſubject with demonſtrative clearneſs, alleges the acceptation of the word among the Jews with ſignal ſucceſs *. He ſhews that it was appropriated with them in the ſame manner either to the whole nation or church of Iſrael, which was a type of the univerſal church of Chriſt, or to thoſe that met for worſhip in the ſame ſynagogue. Now, this being the then received acceptation in the time of our Lord, he would not have been underſtood, had he em-

* See Dr. Cambell's Lectures on Church Hiſtory, vol. i. page 320.

ployed it in any other; and as he could not intend the whole commonwealth of Chriſtians, it muſt be a congregation of Chriſtians. But how unintelligibly do they repreſent Chriſt as ſpeaking, who give ſo many acceptations to the word church? Suppoſe we inſert congregation inſtead of church, who would underſtand him to refer to eccleſiaſtical courts? Yet *congregation* is no more fixed by preſbyterians to their aſſemblies for public worſhip, than εκκλησια was to denote the members of a ſynagogue, or of an apoſtolical church. Neither is εκκλησια more applicable, nor indeed is it ſo applicable to the various preſbyterian aſſemblies, as *congregation*. A ſynod or general aſſembly might have been at firſt denominated congregation as well as by the term by which they are now known. What preſbyterian now would ſay "tell it to the congregation," intending by that a church court. Yet this would not be more ſenſeleſs than what they attribute to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Another argument Dr Campbell brings, equally convincing, is derived from the practice of the churches in the firſt ages. "Another collateral and corroborative "evidence," ſays he, "that by εκκλησια is here meant "not a repreſentative body but the whole of a particu- "lar congregation, is the actual uſage of the church "for the firſt three hundred years. I had occaſion "formerly to remark, that as far down as Cyprian's "time, which was the middle of the third century, "when the power of the people was on the decline, "it continued to be the practice, that nothing in mat- "ters of ſcandal and cenſure could be concluded, with- "out the conſent and approval of the congregation. "And this, as it appears to have been pretty uniform, "and to have ſubſiſted from the beginning, is, in my "opinion, the beſt commentary which we, at this "diſtance, can obtain on the paſſage." See page 325. vol. i.

I may add farther, that the circumſtance of the word *church* being afterwards uſed to ſignify the houſe of worſhip, is a very clear corroborative argument

argument to ſhew that an individual worſhipping aſſembly of Chriſtians, and not a repreſentative body of church rulers, or the churches of a particular diſtrict, was firſt ſo called. Though this be not ſcriptural, yet it ſhews the primitive application of the word, when the houſe received the name of the aſſembly. Juſt as the Jewiſh houſes of worſhip were called ſynagogues, from the aſſembling of the people therein. This ſhews what ſort of aſſembly a church was. Had it been a meeting of church rulers, like a ſynod, &c. none but the places of their aſſembling would have been called *churches*. This, in my opinion, is the moſt unexceptionable ſpecies of historic proof. It can never be biaſed, and is often the ſureſt criterion of the truth of facts.

CHAPTER VII.

The Independency of the Apoſtolical Churches proved, from the Apoſtolical Injunctions, and inferred from other circumſtances in the Epiſtles.

Not only is the independency of individual churches proved from the origin, and profane and ſacred acceptation of the word by which they are denominated; but the laws and regulations given by the apoſtles for their direction, put the matter beyond doubt.—The whole diſcipline of Chriſt's houſe is, without exception, committed to the individual church, conſiſting of the paſtors and brethren of one congregation. Apoſtolical injunctions, which cannot be obeyed in any other than an independent church, implies the neceſſity of independency. Now of this ſort, are all the rules, with reſpect to the adminiſtration of diſcipline. It is the whole church, and not a church ſeſſion, that is to receive members. Rom. xiv. 1. "Him that is weak in the faith, *receive ye.*"—"*Receive ye.*" Now, no preſbyterian congregation could comply with this injunction. The brethren have nothing to do with the receiving of members. This province is entirely uſurped by the miniſter and lay-elders.—The epiſtle to the Corinthians, is addreſſed to the church of God at Corinth, which is explained, (1 Cor. i. 2.) to conſiſt, not of miniſter and lay-elders, but of "them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called to be ſaints." Now, the power of excommunication is expreſsly veſted in the whole church, (chap. v. 4.) not in church rulers alone. If a preſbyterian congregation would preſume to interfere with their rulers upon ſuch a point, it would be actual rebellion. Nay, the whole congregation, miniſter, elders and people, could not put way from their communion the groſſeſt adulterer, if

the ſuperior eccleſiaſtical judicatories would think proper to ſcreen him. But the church at Corinth, is commanded to put away from *among themſelves*, that wicked perſon, (verſe 13,) and to purge out the old leaven, (verſe 7.) To judge of the application of diſcipline, that is to examine and judge whether a crime be chargeable upon an accuſed member, is alſo ſtated, (verſe 12.) to be the buſineſs of the whole church. "Do ye not judge them that are within?" The whole church is to judge the accuſed perſon, though the church rulers are to execute the judgment. Now, a church which cannot admit an apoſtolical direction, cannot be apoſtolically conſtituted. Indeed, excommunication, though the higheſt act of church authority, is ſo peculiarly the buſineſs of the whole church, that the apoſtle does it not himſelf by an act of apoſtolical authority, but commits it to the ſaints themſelves, that there might be an example and model to all future ages. Likewiſe, in Gal v. 12. he does not ſay, "I cut off thoſe that trouble you." but "I would that they were cut off." The reſtoration of fallen brethren upon repentance, is alſo the duty of the whole church, (2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. 8 Gal. vi. 1.) Here, it is obſervable, that the excommunication was not the act of a ſelect part of the church, but "was inflicted of many." We have alſo ſeen that the church was the final judge of perſonal and civil diſputes among its members, Mat. xviii. 17 1 Cor. vi. In theſe and other inſtances, the inſtructions and commands given, neceſſarily ſuppoſe the conſtitution of the church to which they were directed, to have been independent; for to no other could they have been applied; in no other could they have been executed.

It will not be deemed a ſufficient anſwer to this, that the apoſtolical diſcipline may be executed in ſpirit and ſubſtance, though not by thoſe apoſtolically appointed. The thing muſt not only be done, but done as it is commanded. The command muſt not only be obeyed in its primary object, but in the appointed manner, by the divinely appointed agents. Here we have not only the thing commanded to be done, but the perſons commanded to do it. We may as well ſay, that we need not exe-

cute apoſtolical diſcipline, as that it may not be done by thoſe apoſtolically appointed. The judges are here as clearly appointed, as the thing to be judged. To fulfil a law, we muſt not only do the thing the law directs, but in the manner directed by the law. The law ordains the murderer to die, but it does not warrant any but thoſe legally appointed to judge, condemn, and execute him. The king ſummons his parliament: but the ſenators, intent upon their rural amuſements, or the improvement of their eſtates, ſend their ſtewards. They meet; they enact laws; they ſend them to the king. Will he, will the conſtitution, recognize ſuch legiſlators? And will the Lord Chriſt recognize the proceedings of the unconſtitutional judicatories, of what are called repreſentative churches? Shall they be excuſed, who, on account of buſineſs, amuſement, or indolence, have neglected their duty as church members? They have no more authority to delegate the performance of this, than of any other duty which they owe to ſociety, to their families, or to God.—Would private Chriſtians let any one perſuade them, that they were to be preſent in heaven by repreſentation only? It would be every whit as eaſy to prove the one as the other. In all the New Teſtament, there is not the ſhadow of a repreſentation, in the church of Chriſt.

To attend to the affairs of Chriſt's houſe, is the *privilege* of all church members. It argues ingratitude, contempt, and indifference, to transfer that right to others. But this is not only a privilege, but a duty, and each member is anſwerable for the perſonal diſcharge of it. Every individual member has the king's commiſſion, and the king's command, to attend to the affairs of his kingdom, in concert with his brethren. If any neglect their duty, or pretend to depute others to repreſent them, they are guilty of diſobedience to Chriſt, indifference to his laws, intereſt, and honour; and are traitors, as preſuming to alter the conſtitution of his church. If any man, or body of men, aſſume the right by invaſion, or accept it by delegation, they are uſurpers, and act without, and contrary to the king's commands. But the very

idea of a transference of duty, in religious mattes, is abſurd. None can think, judge, or act for another, with reſpect to ſpiritual things.

I have ſuppoſed the work to be done, and diſcipline to be duly adminiſtered But I deny that this ever is or can be the caſe in a perfect manner, when *they* do not the work who are divinely appointed. The imperfect ſtate of diſcipline, in all preſbyterian churches, fully proves the aſſertion. Some of them, indeed, have a multiplicity of human rules, which they are very rigorous in putting into execution; but I know not any, that act fully up to the diſcipline of the churches of the New Teſtament.

Not only is diſcipline and all church power committed to the individual church, but every direction, command, and exhortation is ſuited to ſuch alone. There are laws ſufficient in the New Teſtament for the government and conducting of an independent church, but not a ſingle rule, or precept, or example for the government of a number of churches combined. All its rules and examples are applicable to individual congregations only. Independent churches have either precept or example for every caſe that can poſſibly occur. They are not obliged to proceed one ſtep upon dubious ground. But it is evident that preſbyterians are obliged to vindicate their diſcipline, &c. by borrowing what is applied to individual churches. Thus the epiſtles to the church at Rome, to the church at Corinth, &c. &c. are epiſtles to individual churches, and ſpeak uniformly either of individual duties, or reciprocal duties of church-members, and of the duties of the elders to the flock, and of the flock to the elders. But there is not a word as to the duties of elders as members of an eccleſiaſtical aſſembly, or of the duties of private Chriſtians as members of an aſſociated church. Now, if there was ſuch a thing as an aſſociated church under the ſame government, is it not ſtrange we ſhould have no rules with reſpect to it; that elders ſhould have no directions as to their duties in theſe aſſemblies; and private Chriſtians as to their relations to them? The individual flock is often called

upon to obey their paſtors or rulers, but never is either flock or ſhepherd commanded to obey a ſuperior aſſembly. The apoſtles frequently and earneſtly inculcate love among the church members, and warn them againſt ſchiſm and diviſions. Not a word, however, do they ſay as to the duty of union among ſeveral churches under the ſame government, nor of the ſin of one church ſeparating from another. Is not this a plain proof that they were not externally joined? But men have got a convenient way of quoting ſcripture now; for what is ſaid (1 Cor. i. 10.) againſt the members of the ſame individual church going into factions and parties, they apply to prove the ſin of one church ſeparating from another, or individuals ſeparating from the church in which they were educated. We never hear the terrific word *ſchiſm* in any other ſenſe in modern application. But it is evident that the ſchiſms which the apoſtle here reprobates, are not the ſeparation of a part even of an individual church, ſo as to form another; for this may be often done to advantage; it is the members of the ſame church running into factions and cabals, againſt which he ſpeaks. Thus, in every other inſtance, they have to borrow what is ſpoken to individual churches, and apply it to aſſociated churches. Either the ſcriptures are lame, or ſuch aſſociations are unſcriptural.

There are various other indirect hints in the epiſtles, which will occur to the reader who is accuſtomed *to mine* into the word of God, and *weigh* each particle, as more precious than the gold of Ophir. Truth is ever conſiſtent, and that opinion which does not gain ſtrength from a progreſſive acquaintance with the ſcripture, is not likely to be a ſcripture truth. That hypotheſis that forbids a minute attention to the moſt caſual and indirect circumſtance divinely recorded, cannot be well founded. An inſtance of what I mean, we have in 2 Cor. iii. 1. The apoſtle reaſons that he had not, like others, need of recommendatory letters either to or *from the church* at Corinth. Now, the manner of the apoſtle's ſpeaking here, would have been altogether improper, had the church at Corinth been under preſbyterian church government. He ſpeaks of the recommendatory let-

ters as neceſſary to ſome, but unneceſſary to him, as coming from the *church*, not the preſbytery. Had the apoſtle been a preſbyterian, he would have ſubjected himſelf and this church to ſevere cenſure, had he received credentials from it. This is the prerogative of the preſbytery or church rulers alone *. How would a modern church judicatory reſent it, if a probationer were to receive credentials from one of their congregations? The apoſtle himſelf could not be received into the general ſynod, if he could not produce his credentials from his preſbytery. Nor could any miniſter or congregation *regularly* give him their pulpit.

The whole ſtrain of the letters of the apoſtle Paul to the churches, ſhews them to have been independent. He uniformly addreſſes, praiſes, or blames the church itſelf, and never a church ſeſſion or eccleſiaſtical council of any ſort. In chapter v. and xi. of 1 Cor. he blames the whole members, with reſpect to the inceſtuous perſon and their irregularities in eating the Lord's Supper. Had they been under preſbyterian government, the *brethren* could not have been guilty; in keeping the fornicator, becauſe they had no authority for putting him out. The ſeſſion and ſuperior courts would have been excluſively to blame; and would, undoubtedly, have received marked apoſtolical cenſure. If improper perſons are admitted to communion among preſbyterians, what private member takes the guilt upon himſelf; but, if he diſapproves of it, exclaims againſt the ſeſſion. Upon the ſame perſons ſhould the abuſes of the Lord's Supper have been principally chargeable.

In like manner, when our Lord writes to the ſeven churches of Aſia, he praiſes or blames them individually. He never cenſures one, for the errors of another, though, with great ſeverity, he reprimands each, for the errors of any part of itſelf. He charges the whole church as guilty, in keeping or retaining in communion an errone-

* See alſo Acts xviii. 27. When Apollos was diſpoſed to paſs over into Achaia, he received recommendatory letters from the brethren, not a claſſical preſbytery.

ous or profligate member; but he never charges one church, with the errors of another. Now, if they had been under the presbyterian form of church government, all the churches would have been chargeable with the faults and defects of each, as much as the whole individual church was chargeable with those of its members. Neither does he call upon the one to reform the other; but each to reform itself. Now, had the churches of Lesser Asia been presbyterian, our Lord would have written to the synod or presbytery, and not to the individual churches to reform themselves. A presbyterian congregation cannot reform itself. Christ, therefore, could not have been the author of presbytery.

CHAPTER VIII.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Having inveſtigated the claims of preſbytery and independency upon ſcripture evidence, it may be proper to take notice of ſome objections that I have heard urged againſt the ſcheme which I defend. Some of theſe are really ſo futile, that I am almoſt aſhamed to bring them forward, to give them a formal refutation. But I have obſerved in converſation on this ſubject, that when the advocates of preſbytery are driven from the ſcriptures, they ſometimes ſhelter themſelves under the ſuppoſed defects of independency, or advantages of preſbytery. And it is really aſtoniſhing with what ſuperficial reaſoning, they will impoſe upon themſelves. A few of ſuch objections I will mention, and diſpatch with the utmoſt brevity.

1. It is alleged, that "there are too many ſects already, and that we ſhould rather endeavour to unite "thoſe that are already formed, than form another." I perfectly agree with the objector, that there are too many ſects already, and that it is our duty to endeavour to unite Chriſtians in all things. But how is this to be done? Is it by each party propoſing to throw away a part of what they look upon to be truth, and embrace a little of what they conſider wrong, that they may ſplice up a worldly union? Is it by the church rulers of different ſects, meeting to compromiſe their differences, like a reference after a quarrel in a country fair? Is it by ſuch language as this, "I will give up ſo much, give you up ſo much, and we will meet?" Is this a ſcriptural way to unite ſects? Is it not rather for each to appeal to the Bible, and meet on that common

ground? Should not the language be, "We cannot all "be right, let us then try our ſyſtems by the ſtandard "of truth, adopt whatever it recommends, and reject "whatever it condemns?" Truly it is a very modeſt way of reaſoning, that there are ſo many ſects already, that there is no room for introducing the model which Chriſt has left us in the churches of the apoſtles! If once Chriſtians could be brought to *feel* it their duty to *ceaſe from man*, and renounce every ſtandard but the Bible, they would not be long in uniting. Every union that is attempted, or affected upon other grounds, is not of God, but of the world.

2. It is ſuſpected that "the encouragement that is "given to call in queſtion the opinions of our fore-fa- "thers, and ſcrutinize them ſo ſeverely by the ſcriptures, "will excite ſuch a ſpirit of innovation, that it will lead "to univerſal ſcepticiſm." Nay, ſome go ſo far as actually to fix the time when ſuch inquirers muſt be advanced into atheiſts.

Truly it is a very aſtoniſhing thing that a habit of ſearching the word of God, of relying implicitly upon it, and comparing all human opinions with that ſtandard, muſt lead to ſcepticiſm. As well may it be ſaid, that a habit of truſting God will lead us to diſtruſt him. The ſcriptures then are to blame for commending the Bereans for "ſearching the ſcriptures daily whether theſe things were ſo." If our anceſtors at the reformation, had been afraid of theſe conſequences, they never would have dared to call in queſtion the antient uſages of their fathers, or to have condemned them by the word of God. Never can any hurt ariſe from ſearching the ſcriptures and a habit of being regulated by them. "To the law and to the teſtimony; if they ſpeak not agreeable to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them."

I do not however mean to ſay, that there are no extremes on this ſide of the queſtion: but I do ſay, that theſe do not conſiſt in comparing every human opinion about divine things, with the word of God; in reject-

ing every tittle of what is contrary to this ſtandard; and adopting the mereſt minutiæ of what is pointed out. To run into extremes here, muſt be to go farther than the ſcriptures. While we keep upon this ground, we cannot advance too far. But in ſearching the ſcriptures upon this, as well as every other ſubject, there is great need of humility, and a conſciouſneſs of our own nothingneſs in the ſight of God. If ever we begin the ſearch with a deſire to go beyond others, and have the honour to be more ſharp-ſighted than thoſe who preceded us, we ſhall certainly err. The natural pride of the human heart ſhews itſelf in various ways, and it is not ſtrange that it ſhould ſometimes lead even good men into ſingularities. The ſcriptures are plain, but it is only "the Spirit that can lead us into all truth." In ſearching the ſcriptures for the mind of God, we ſhould never neglect to aſk, not formally, but earneſtly and continually, the guidance of that heavenly conductor. O what prayer! what ſelf-abaſement! what a thirſt for truth! what ſelf denial, are neceſſary in thoſe who would advance in the knowledge of divine things! If we depend upon our own ſuperior ſagacity, if we prize not the ſmalleſt ſcripture truth as more precious than rubies, and are not ready to give up the deareſt earthly poſſeſſions and connexions rather than part with it; if we have not ſimplicity of view, and a ſingle eye to the glory of God, it will not be ſtrange if we go aſtray in our ſearch. But if we are made willing to receive truth at the greateſt riſk, and, conſcious of our weakneſs, inceſſantly and importunately to crave the direction of the Spirit, I do not think that the God of truth will ſuffer us to be led aſtray. Whilſt, therefore, we, like the Bereans, ſearch the ſcriptures for ourſelves, let us not be *heady* or *high-minded*, but humbly wait at the feet of Jeſus, to learn wiſdom from his lips.

3. It is alleged that "the preſbyterian form of go-
"vernment is better calculated to repreſs hereſy, pre-
"ſerve purity of doctrine, and authoritatively ſettle all
"diſputes that ariſe among their congregations." But I aſk, how have they this power? Is it by force or perſuaſion? If it is by the latter, then independents enjoy

it in its utmoſt latitude; if it is by the former, then the goſpel diſclaims it; Chriſt abhors it. Is not this evidently inconſiſtent with the whole ſpirit and letter of the goſpel? Theſe are carnal, not ſpiritual weapons. Is not this to put a hand to the ark, and a diſtruſt of the power of the great head of the church, who bears it upon his own ſhoulders? What is the crime in the nations which God hath always puniſhed with the greateſt rigour? Is it not that of preſuming to take upon themſelves the defence and protection of his people the Jews? Thoſe who injured his people, are indeed puniſhed; but thoſe who ſtepped in between him and them, to take their confidence off himſelf, are puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity. Egypt, that oppreſſed Iſrael, was puniſhed; but the crime was, as it were, afterwards forgotten; but Egypt that became the ſtaff of Iſrael, is not pardoned till this very day. From the overthrow of Nectanebus by Ochus, 350 years before Chriſt, it never has had a king of its own. Degraded from among the nations, governed by foreigners, enſlaved and oppreſſed, God hath exhibited it as a malefactor in the gibbet, for a warning to others. He is as jealous of the prerogative of ſupporting his church, as a huſband is of the confidence and affection of his wife, and views every foreign interference, as an attack upon his honour. Will men, then, never learn to truſt God with his own cauſe, and uſe only the means that he hath appointed to preſerve his truths? Will they never ceaſe to provoke his jealouſy, by aſſociations to defend his church? Is there any fear that ever the gates of hell will ſhake it off Immanuel's ſhoulders? Alas, that ever Chriſtians ſhould have thought of ſubſtituting human bulwarks, for the continual preſence of Jehovah, who is as a *wall of fire around his Zion!*

But the preſbyterian method of preſerving orthodoxy, and ſettling diſputes, is not only unſcriptural, but is always without any real advantage. They may keep their members from preaching contrary to their ſtandard but can they enable "the blind to lead the blind, without both falling into the ditch." Force may make

a hypocrite, but can never make a Chriſtian. Intereſt may conſtrain a carnal man to profeſs the leading truths of the goſpel, but midnight darkneſs will reign in his congregation. Among many there is a continual cry of *ſoundneſs* and *orthodoxy*, who appear to every ſpiritual man to be deſtitute of the truth, as it is in Jeſus, and to hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs. Even among the ſtricter ſects of preſbyterians, I am conſtrained to ſay, that while ſome of them do not fail to ſhew their zeal by lifting up a teſtimony againſt the corruptions of the general ſynod, they appear to be *hunting* after the world with equal avidity. And I know where it is ſaid, "If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him."

4. It is alleged in behalf of preſbytery, that "in the "multitude of counſellors there is ſafety; that ſeveral "congregations muſt have more wiſdom than one; and "that an aſſembly of learned men muſt be better quali-"fied to tranſact church matters than an ignorant mul-"titude."

This reaſoning might have ſome effect, if there was any thing left to the wiſdom of man. The generality of Chriſtians, are the "weak things of this world," and of all men living they are the leaſt qualified for the arduous duty of legiſlation. But thanks be to God, he hath left no ſuch things to be done by any. Every neceſſary law and direction are given, and nothing more is neceſſary, than to judge of their application, to which the moſt ordinary capacity is equal, in the uſe of the appointed means, and under the promiſed guidance of the Spirit. Poor deſpiſed Chriſtians would indeed be ill qualified to appear in what is impiouſly ſtyled a court of Chriſt. But the meaneſt and moſt ignorant of them are equal to judge of every caſe of diſcipline, that can occur in Chriſt's houſe; for it is ſaid that "they ſhall be all taught of God" And indeed I would expect a more juſt determination from ſuch, than from the repreſentatives of all the churches on earth. Chriſt's preſence is with the one, as being according to his own ap-

pointment, while it is likely the other ſhall be left to their own wiſdom *.

* Such objectors differ very widely from the Apoſtle Paul, who ſuppoſes that even the weakeſt ſaints are capable of judging not merely of the ſpiritual concerns of the church, but alſo of ſettling the civil diſputes of the brethren. 1 Cor. vi. 4 "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, ſet them to judge who are leaſt eſteemed in the church" We are not to ſuppoſe from this however, that a church is always to ſelect "the leaſt eſteemed" for the arbitration of civil differences. In my opinion the ſpirit of the paſſage is this—differences among brethren ſhould be ſettled by arbitration of the church. Some of the Corinthians had tranſgreſſed this rule, and ſhewn. by their appealing to the civil law, that they ſuppoſed there were not any among their brethren fit for this office The apoſtle takes fire at the ſuppoſition, that thoſe who were to judge wicked men and angels as aſſeſſors with Chriſt in the great day, ſhould be eſteemed unfit to judge in ſuch comparatively trivial matters; and to ſhew them that he looked upon all Chriſtians to be qualified for this buſineſs, he bids them chooſe from among themſelves even thoſe that were accounted the weakeſt. As if he had ſaid, to ſhew you that they are wiſe in whom the Spirit of God dwells, let the "leaſt eſteemed" brethren be ſingled out upon any emergency, and they will wiſely determine the matter. Then he ſubjoins, "I ſpeak this to your ſhame;" you have looked upon all your brethren as unwiſe or unjuſt; the Spirit of God declares them all, even the leaſt eſteemed of them, to be qualified to ſettle your diſputes. Are you not then aſhamed of your opinion and conduct, with reſpect, to your brethren, judging ſo unfavourably of them, and differing ſo much from the judgment of God? That the apoſtle looked upon all the ſaints as fit for ſuch an office, is clear, not only from the words "leaſt eſteemed," but alſo from the arguments of illuſtration in the 2d and 3d verſes—the ſaints judging the world and fallen angels. All the ſaints ſmall and great, ſhall have this honour; therefore, to make the argument concluſive, all the ſaints muſt be fit for the duty of arbitration But that a church is not bound *always* to ſelect the "leaſt eſteemed" for this purpoſe, is clear, not only from the ſpirit of the paſſage already explained, but from what follows in the 5th verſe—"Is it ſo that there is not a wiſe man amongſt you? No, not one that ſhall be able to judge between his brethren?" This queſtion ſuppoſes, that the church was at liberty to chooſe

I have heard, that the moſt uſual, and the moſt effectual way that certain perſons have taken to prejudice the minds of the people of this country againſt independents, is, by repreſenting them as "diſorderly;"—"without diſcipline;"—"breaking down the hedge;"—"not coming in by the door."

In the New Teſtament, Chriſt calls himſelf the door; if any one, then, come not in at this door, I heartily conſent that all pulpit doors be ſhut againſt him. God is ſaid to have made a hedge about his vineyard. But it ſeems now, that not Chriſt, but the preſbytery, is *the door*, and, that the hedge of God's laws and inſtitutions is not ſufficiently high and prickly to keep out wild beaſts, but it muſt be new-made, or at leaſt mended by ſynodical authority. I am afraid that the generality, even of Chriſtians, in this country, are much miſtaken in their notions of the diſcipline of Chriſt's houſe. It is not the punctual attention to a wide ſyſtem of human rules and regulations, that deſerves the name of diſcipline, but the faithful execution of all the laws, given by Chriſt in the New Teſtament. Thoſe ſects, who, in this country, are moſt highly applauded for diſcipline, have indeed, a rigorous code of human laws, and are peculiarly ſtrict in the obſervance of them; but this is not diſcipline, but eccleſiaſtical uſurpation and tyranny. Chriſt's diſcipline is calculated to prevent the entrance of the carnal profeſſor, or to diſcover him, if he has been admitted. But ſuch a perſon, if he has a decent behaviour, and a ſound of orthodoxy, might paſs his life in the moſt rigorous preſbyterian connections, without detection. He muſt, indeed, have a conſiderable portion of phariſaical righteouſneſs, but he will be admitted and

the wiſeſt among the brethren. If then, the "leaſt eſteemed," are qualified judges, they are inexcuſable, who will not be amenable to the deciſion of the moſt eſteemed in the church. Corollary—If the weakeſt brethren are qualified to decide in matters of property, without appealing to the ſuperior learning, wiſdom, or judicial knowledge of a preſbytery or ſynod, nay without even appealing to the civil law, much more are they qualified to judge of every thing, as to the diſcipline of Chriſt's houſe.

continued without the life and power of godlineſs. This is a bold charge; if any ſect of preſbyterians think it unjuſt, let them repel it. Before they can do this, they muſt be able to declare, that there is not an individual in their connexion, that they do not look upon as a member of Chriſt. If they cannot make this declaration, their diſcipline is defective. I can refer them to an independent church, conſiſting of more than 600 members, in which each individual can make this declaration concerning his brethren. I am therefore conſtrained to charge ſuch objectors either with the groſſeſt ignorance, or wilful miſrepreſentation. A want of diſcipline, is what I charge upon preſbyterians. This is among the chief objections I have to them. "By their traditions, they have made void the law of God." But let them produce one ſingle rule of diſcipline, appointed by Chriſt, which independents refuſe to admit. If they can ſhew them any thing in ſcripture, which they have not hitherto obſerved, I am ſure they will not act up to their principles, if they do not adopt it with gratitude. But if they muſt be called "diſorderly," becauſe they reject the interference of man in the things of God, becauſe they refuſe obedience to any rules but thoſe of Chriſt, they are not concerned to repel the charge.

6. When preſbyterians are driven from the Bible, they ſometimes ſhelter themſelves under the wings of learned and pious men. "Are you wiſer or better than "our anceſtors, who have ſhed their blood for preſby-"tery? If ever the Spirit of God was with any body "of men, it was with the Weſtminſter divines." With ſome, it is very common to point at the reformation as perfect, and every declenſion in principle or practice in profeſſors, is a declenſion, not from the ſcriptures, but the *reformation*. They muſt indeed be blind, who do not look upon the reformation as the greateſt national bleſſing any people ever experienced; but thoſe who thus idolize the reformers, are guilty of ſetting up another God in Iſrael. However much we have been benefited by their labours, however eminent were their attainments, it is "to the law, and to the teſtimony,"

not to the reformers, we are directed as the ſtandard of truth. As to the Weſtminſter aſſembly, I am neither concerned to accuſe nor condemn them —Epiſcopacy, preſbytery, and independency have each had ſome of the moſt pious men in the liſt of their defenders; the Chriſtian then can have no ſafe guide but the Bible.

CHAPTER IX.

Reaſons why ſome are apt to conclude, that there is no Church-model in Scripture.

I HAVE now given my reaſons, why it is probable that the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament contain a model of church government, and have examined the pretenſions of preſbytery and independency. Before I diſmiſs the ſubject of church government, I think it not amiſs, to point out a few reaſons, why ſome ingenious and pious men have not been able to diſcover any definite plan of any kind. If diſintereſted enquirers differ materially upon any point, in the examination of which they draw from a common ſource, there is likely to be ſome circumſtances in their ſituation which lead to the difference; ſomething that tends to involve the ſubject of inquiry.

1. In my opinion, one thing that tends to prevent ſome from ſeeing a model of church government in the New Teſtament, is, their being accuſtomed to take their ideas of the government of a ſpiritual, from that of a temporal kingdom. They are apt to expect a vigorous plan, a-kin to their ideas of the beſt conſtituted civil governments. Whatever they judge the beſt calculated to govern a kingdom of this world, they look upon to be the fitteſt for the kingdom of Chriſt. In examining the ſcriptures, then, it is no wonder they paſs and repaſs the apoſtolical model, without ſeeing it. This is too

ſimple to be effectual. Like Naaman the Syrian, who thought he was mocked by the prophet, when he preſcribed as his cure, to waſh in the water of Jordan, they do not think it worth their trouble, even to give it a trial. They muſt have a firm and coercive plan, calculated to ſuſtain Chriſtianity, and avenge it of its adverſaries, as civil rights are by civil laws. In this view, I grant that the apoſtolical government muſt diſappear, when brought into contraſt or competition with either preſbytery or epiſcopacy. Preſbytery is a vigorous republic; but as I ſaid elſewhere, *this* is not calculated to govern a ſingle carnal family. It would be totally inefficient in worldly policy. To thoſe, then who have theſe worldly ideas of Chriſt's kingdom, independency is like David going out with his ſling and pebbles againſt Goliah.

2. Others are much influenced by the carnal inſtitutions, and pompous and maltifarious Jewiſh heirarchy and ſanhedrim. They are apt to transfer their ideas of the government of the Jewiſh church, to that of the Chriſtian. If they are too impartial and enlightened to pretend to ſee any thing of this nature in the New Teſtament, they are inclined to think, that for this reaſon, we are left to form a mode of church government for ourſelves, according to time and circumſtances. They do not find what they expect, and they haſtily conclude that nothing is to be found.

3. Many inquirers have been all their lives ſo accuſtomed to the pompous, multifarious, and complicated ſyſtems of preſbytery, and epiſcopacy, that when they go to the New Teſtament they are led to overlook the ſimple apoſtolical plan. Their minds are filled with theſe intricate and punctilious ſyſtems, and are ſo habituated to the voluminous canons, laws, rules, regulations, acts, &c. &c. &c. which are to be found in almoſt all modern churches, that the Scripture directions for church government, appear altogether defective, obſcure, and unadequate. They look into the Scriptures —they can find neither the church of England, nor the church of Scotland, nor any of the numerous ſects

formed on the ſame model—they inſtantly conclude, that there is no form of government revealed, or at moſt, is only coarſely blocked, to be variouſly formed or ſhaped according to the different humours of ſucceeding ages.

4. Another reaſon why ſome are inclined to conclude that there is nothing delivered in Scripture ſufficient for the government of a church, is, that many writers have repreſented the matter much more clear, full, and expreſs, than it is in reality. With ſome there is not a doctrine more clearly and fully revealed in Scripture. They can ſee their favourite ſyſtem in almoſt every page. When we hear men arguing from the tabernacle of Moſes, to the polity of the Chriſtian church, and aſſerting that Chriſt's faithfulneſs engaged him to be as explicit, full and particular, in giving a model for the government of his church, as Moſes was in erecting the Tabernacle, and thus determining *a priori*, with the moſt arrogant confidence, what Chriſt muſt have done, inſtead of conſidering what he has actually done, we are apt to expect *the moſt ſtately fabric*. When we go to the Scriptures themſelves, if we cannot ſee through the magnifying glaſſes of particular ſects, and ſwallow their *high probalities* for demonſtration, we are ready to conclude that there is no definite model at all. They make us expect a giant; we ſee a man, of nothing but the ordinary ſize; and from our diſappointment, we are ready to look upon him as a very dwarf. When we are made to expect too much, we are apt to be chagrined with our diſappointment; and from our previous high imagination, we think the object more inſignificant than it really is. Dr Pococke tells us he had formed ſuch an idea of the celebrated cataracts of the Nile, from the exaggerated accounts of former travellers, that when he came in ſight of them, ſo very much did they fall below his expectations, ſo far from thinking theſe to be the objects of his curioſity, he aſked when he ſhould reach them; and it was not without ſurpriſe, that he was told they were already in view. Such is the caſe with many when they go to look for church government in the Scriptures.

§ 5. Another thing that tends to hide the Scripture model from some inquirers is their expectation of a *systematic* plan, or a formal treatise on the subject. They look for a *jointed* scheme, as methodically detailed, as presbytery is exhibited in the Westminister Confession. When they look into the New Testament for such a plan, there is nothing like it to be found; the half of the whole epistles would scarcely contain such a system. The conlusion then is, that no form of church government is revealed. I would ask such inquirers, upon what do they found their expectation of a system, or formal treatise on church government? Is there in the whole range of revelation, any thing like a system, upon any subject? Is there any doctrine, is there any precept in scripture delivered systematically? Take, for instance, the doctrine of the atonement; we do not find all the texts that illustrate this doctrine, collected into a system, but scattered from the beginning to the end of revelation. In the same manner, doctrines and precepts are not kept distinct, but intentionally intermingled, as it were, to prevent daring men from separating them, and seting up the one in opposition to the other. Doctrines are there taught practically, and precepts as flowing from the doctrines. We have in the same reasoning, in the same period, doctrine and precept. Thus in Philipians ii. 5.—11, we have the doctrine of Christ's equality with the Father, and the precept of humility, as flowing from this, in the same period.

Indeed the manner of the revelation of divine truth, seems every where calculated and intended to excite to industry and search, and overcome our natural love of ease. Nothing is got by the lazy and inattentive. While on the one hand the great truths of revelation are so plain, that a man may, as it were, "run and read," being found in every pege, so that "the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err therein;" on the other, it is so wisely regulated to spur us to exertion, that to exhibit completely in all its features and bearings, and effectually prove any one point, it is necessary to turn over and over, search every page, compare spi-

ritual things with ſpiritual, and examine the ſame doctrine in the different connexions and views in which it is found in Scripture. In one text a doctrine is taught, perhaps with all its eſſential parts, but with ſome of its features more marked and prominent than others, according to the purpoſe the Holy Spirit meant it to ſerve on that particular occaſion. In another, the ſame truth is brought forward in a different point of view, to ſerve a different purpoſe, with the features that were leſs prominent in the other, now more marked and diſtinct. Like a painter who would exhibit the ſame ſcene in a multiplicity of views, alternately bringing forward and putting into the back ground the different objects which he wants to repreſent. In one repreſentation we have a palace as the chief object of attention, and its owner and family walking at ſome diſtance, are ſeen indiſtinctly. In another, the owner, if a celebrated perſonage, is repreſented as the chief object, and the palace is put into the ſhade. In another, if the painter has an intention to ſhew us principally, ſome ſurpriſing and romantic ſcenery, we will ſee the palace and the maſter both put into the back-ground. Now, that we may form a clear and diſtinct notion of the maſter, the palace, and the ſcenery, we muſt view all the three pictures alternately, though all are repreſented in every one of them. Juſt ſo it is in Scripture. Its truths are ſo ſcattered, and variouſly repreſented, upon ſuch various occaſions, for ſo many diſtinct purpoſes, that we cannot have a complete view of any one of them without examining the whole Bible. They are ſo interwoven, and have ſuch a connexion and mutual dependence upon each other, that a knowledge of one truth cannot thoroughly be obtained without a pretty general acquaintance with all the reſt *. How abſurd is it then, to expect a ſyſtem or formal treatiſe on church govern-

* I am ſure I have found the advantage of this mode of revelation in examining this ſubject. Had it been methodically laid down in one place, and been accompanied with no difficulties, I would have been deprived of much additional knowledge, which I obtained, on many points, in my ſearch.

ment! If the greateſt truths of Scripture are reveale l in this manner, how unreaſonable is it to expect a different method on this point! Yet it appears to me that an attentive obſerver will find that the reaſon why many conclude there is no form of church government laid down in Scripture, is becauſe they do not find *a ſyſtem*.

6. Some are led to think that there is no complete model intended to be exhibited in the New Teſtament, becauſe all we have on this ſubject is given indirectly, and as it were unintentionally, and not ſufficiently and fully explained. I have already hinted at the reaſon why the ſubject could not be conſiſtently handled in an expreſs and copious manner. As we are no where known in Scripture, but in the perſon of the firſt churches, we could not expect a direct addreſs on the ſubject of church government: what is ſaid to them is ſaid to us. And as it would be abſurd to expect that an apoſtle, after *forming a church* in any place, would, in a ſubſequent letter, give them expreſs directions for *the formation of a church*, ſeeing this was already done; all we can expect is an indirect, and as it were, an unintentional alluſion to what was done, and a ſcattered picture of their church order. Inſtead, then, of being diſappointed at this mode of communication, no other can we reaſonably expect. Indirect hints, incidental obſervations, and a paſſing view of their practice, is all that the *manner* of revelation can admit. The knowledge of their church order muſt neceſſarily be obtained from paſſages where the apoſtles are profeſſedly treating of ſomething elſe. But this is not the only thing to be proved in this manner. The chief knowledge that we have upon many other points, is obtained exactly in this indirect and circuitous way. A diſtinction between ordinary and extraordinary officers is generally admitted; yet the exact boundaries of their office is no where profeſſedly and exactly treated. A ſtanding miniſtry is generally granted, yet the chief proofs of this muſt be obtained from incidental, indirect, and as it were, unintentional hints, and the example of the apoſtolical churches. To prove the truth of the Scrip-

tures themſelves, or any of their doctrines, nothing more is neceſſary than ſufficient evidence to convince the humble earneſt enquirer. It is by no means neceſſary to ſilence the caviller, and diveſt the diſobedient of every pretext. There is not a ſingle doctrine of revelation, the inveſtigation and proof of which, is not accompanied with difficulties. "There muſt be hereſies, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt." If, then, there are difficulties, even with reſpect to truths neceſſary to ſalvation, is it ſtrange that there ſhould be more in matters of comparatively leſs importance?

But though the ſubject is not largely explained and directly inculcated, the ſcattered incidental hints we have, when united, will be found not at all deficient for the purpoſes of church government. They will be found ſo complete, that a church of Chriſt will not be obliged to advance a ſtep but on ſacred ground. If this be the caſe I would aſk, what more do people want? I acknowledge, that this mode of conveying divine truth does not ſuit thoſe who enquire under the influence of a worldly ſpirit When this is the caſe, it will not be ſtrange if the Scriptural materials ſhould appear extremely ſcanty, and obſcure or confuſed. He will be too ready to think himſelf juſtifiable to take the ſide of worldly intereſt, unleſs the glare of evidence be ſuch that it is impoſſible to reſiſt it. He muſt be driven to duty by the thunders of Sinai, and not conſtrained by the gentle voice of Chriſt, when he ſays, "He that loveth me, keepeth my commandments." But we ſhould not aſk, like Henry IV. of France, "Is there ſalvation in ſuch a church?" but with the apoſtle, "Lord what would'ſt thou have me to do?" ready to perform the leaſt, as well as the greateſt of his commandments. We ſhould continually hang upon the lips of our Maſter, ready with the alacrity and alertneſs of an angel, to perform his pleaſure, glad of diſcovering it, though it ſhould rob us of our property, or even our life. Such enquirers, I apprehend, will, after leiſurely inveſtigation, have no need to complain of a want of Scripture materials on this ſubject.

CHAPTER X.

Character of Church Members—or the neceſſity of pure Communion.

I HAVE now ſtated my views of church government, which, after an impartial and leiſurely ſearch, I have been conſtrained to embrace. But I have other reaſons for ſeparating from the general ſynod, which ſtill more pungently touch my conſcience. One of theſe is the continual neceſſity I would be under, of proſtituting the ordinances of Chriſt by promiſcuous communion. I ſhall therefore devote this chapter to point out the character of the members of the apoſtolical churches, and prove the neceſſity of pure communion. If I ſucceed, it will be evident, that I cannot conſcientiouſly remain in a connexion in which I am obliged to tranſgreſs ſo important a law of Chriſt. Even were I ſtill a friend to preſbyterian government, I could not hold communion with the general ſynod, nor any other preſbyterian connexion that I am acquainted with. In none of them that I know of, is there purity of communion. —Many of them, indeed, have raiſed very high human hedges around the Lord's table, and have enjoined very rigid terms of communion: but in none of them, I believe, is *credible evidence of the new birth* the teſt of memberſhip. The gate is indeed ſhut againſt the openly profane, but the *decent* worldling may paſs At the ſame time, the child of God is excluded, if he cannot digeſt all the peculiarities of the ſect, and load his ſoul with a maſs of human obligations. If I am miſtaken with reſpect to any involved in this charge, I will be glad to retract my cenſure, upon convincing

information. I do not write to compliment, neither do I write to expoſe, but to reform. This is a point which I know many preſbyterians will not diſpute. They acknowledge its deſirableneſs, but doubt, in the preſent ſtate of the church, as they ſpeak, its practicability. Nay, all who exclude any, virtually ackowledge this principle. For if they exclude one ſort of ſinners, by what authority do they admit another? I beg, therefore, that preſbyterians of this deſcription will accompany me through this chapter. Though they are able to diſprove all I have ſaid on the ſubject of church government, yet if I can convince them, of the ſinfulneſs of admitting to communion, any but the credible diſciples of Chriſt, and to perſuade them to act up to their convictions, I will not have loſt my labour. I would be glad indeed, to ſee any of the preſbyterian connexions, even thus far reformed. I acknowledge, I have been guilty in this inſtance, hitherto, and am perſuaded, that nothing has contributed ſo much to render my labours ſo unfruitful, though I had not the ſame views of the ſubject which I have at preſent. I look upon promiſcuous communion to reſemble adultery—it muſt be viewed by a jealous God with the utmoſt diſpleaſure. What is the reaſon, while there are multiplied ſects of flamingly orthodox preſbyterians that darkneſs covers our land, and groſs darkneſs the people? Is the fault in man or in God? "Behold the arm of the Lord is not ſhortened that he cannot ſave, nor his ear heavy, that he cannot hear," &c.

When we look into the epiſtles for the character of the members of apoſtolical churches, we find that they were conſidered as members of the body of Chriſt, 1 Cor. i. 2. In writing to the church at Corinth the apoſtle denominates the members *ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called to be ſaints.* Were I not already too voluminous, I would quote and illuſtrate the addreſſes and many other paſſages of the epiſtles to the churches, to ſhew the character of the members of the apoſtolical churches; I muſt be contented with referring to them, Rom. i. 7. 2 Cor. i. 1. Eph. i. 1. Phil. i. 1. Col. i. 2. and ii. 6. 1 Theſſ. i. 1. 2 Theſſ. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 2.

2 Pet. i. 1. 1 Cor. vi. 11, 19, 20.—x. 17.—xii. 27. 2 Theſſ. ii. 13, 14. 1 Cor. x. 16 17 Theſe paſſages will clearly point out what is the character of thoſe who ought to be recognized as church members. The church at Rome is commanded to receive him that is *weak in the faith*. Now, it is ſuppoſes that they were in the habit of judging of thoſe whom they admitted to membership and that thoſe who had *no faith* were not to be received. For if they deliberately received any without evidence of faith, there could be no propriety in commanding them to receive him that was *weak in faith*. "Give not that which is holy unto dogs," is as much a command of Chriſt as "thou ſhalt not kill;" and whatever be its primary meaning, it is a general precept, and will hold more eminently true in this inſtance than in any other I am acquainted with. 1 Cor. iii. 10,—16. is more naturally interpreted of the admiſſion of church members, than of doctrines. Both the preceding, and ſucceeding connexion fix it to this. Chriſtians, not doctrines, are the lively ſtones in God's building, and God's huſbandry. His temple is to be built of theſe materials. It is not any doctrine, with reſpect to Chriſt, that is ſaid to be the foundation; but he is the foundation *himſelf*. New members might be added to apoſtolical churches, but new doctrines could not be lawfully promulgated In this ſenſe, the apoſtles not only laid the foundation, but finiſhed the houſe. There are neither gold, ſilver, nor precious ſtones now remaining to be built upon the foundation of the apoſtolical doctrines. But the gold, ſilver and precious ſtones, beautifully repreſent converted church members, who are not injured by the fire, and their different degrees of value *. All are valuable; but while ſome are ſilver, others are gold, and others precious ſtones. On the other hand, unconverted church members are like wood, hay, and ſtubble, which will be conſumed whenever fire is applied. The fire of temptation and perſecution will try every church, during which, unconverted members will ſhew their combuſtible nature,

* This interpretation is ſtrengthened from Iſaiah liv. 11—13, in which church members are repreſented under ſimilar figures.

and be consumed. At least the fire of the great judgment will try the house of what sort of materials it is built, and the builders will either have loss or gain, according to the result of the trial. "And he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire," with the utmost difficulty, as a man escaping from the midst of the flames. He being a servant of Christ himself, shall certainly have an entrance, but not an *abundant* entrance into heaven. Yea, and very probably, when the church is trying, by means of the fire of temptation and persecution, although he may be preserved from falling, he will be "saved by fire." Heavy trials and afflictions may be laid upon him, and the Lord may chastise him sore, though he may not give him over to death. He may be sorely scorched in the fire of affliction, although he be not burnt up. If this be the true interpretation of the passage, which is adopted by some of the best commentators, and which I have always thought the most natural, from the first time I heard it suggested, there is an awful lesson in it to every church ruler, and to every church member, not to hazard the peace and comfort of their own souls here, nor the loss of a part of their reward hereafter, by building God's house with combustible materials; admitting unconverted sinners to membership. But the character of church members is clearly determined from Act ii. 47. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved," which is literally translated thus: "The Lord added the *saved* daily to the church." It does not mean that the Lord added to the church universal by conversion, though that is previously supposed; but that he added such as were converted to the church at Jerusalem. As soon as sinners are converted, they are *saved*, and none but the *saved* were added to the church at Jerusalem. It was the *Lord added them*, because the terms of admission were not the *prudential regulations* of the church, but the Scripture evidence of their being *saved*. The church was only God's instrument. "The Lord saved them," and the church seeing this, received them.

When we consider the character of the generality who sit down at the Lord's table, and then read that awful

asseveration (1 Cor. xi. 27.) it is enough to make the hand to tremble which distributes among them the emblems of the body and blood of Christ. Indeed, I am really astonished that my conscience could ever have borne it. Ah! the guilt of professing Christians, in this single instance. If every unworthy communicant is a murderer, yea a murderer of the Lord Christ, what must be the guilt of all sects of presbyterians? Is it any wonder that the labours of faithful individuals among them, should be in a great measure unproductive. If the murder of a man like ourselves be a crime so heinous, in the estimation of God and man, how aggravated a crime is the murder of the Son of God? What countless thousands of stupid sinners are permitted rashly to embrue their hands in the blood of Christ? Dreadful sentence! "Whoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Now, how much more aggravated is the guilt of the church that admits such members, and the pastor that administers this ordinance to them? I know, indeed, that they usually hold themselves excused, by faithfully warning them of their danger, and thus laying their blood upon their own heads. This indeed was my own refuge. I wished to persuade myself, that if I was faithful to point out the characters of such as were unworthy, in a clear and explicit manner, and fervently warn them of their danger, that then I was innocent. But I now clearly see that this refuge was untenable, and have plainly told my people, that I would no more administer that ordinance among them, in the same promiscuous manner than I would descend from the pulpit with a sword in my hand to destroy them. I have no standard but the Bible, and am ready to change any erroneous sentiment or conduct, as soon as I discover it. We are frequently mistaken for want of having made any matter the subject of particular consideration. But if any minister of a feeling conscience, can allow himself in the promiscuous administration of this ordinance, after his attention has been called to the subject, and having made it a matter of prayer and investigation, I am really astonished. The apology of faithfully warning, will not stand even

in human judgment, far leſs in the awful day of God. If I put a ſword into the hand of an angry madman, it will be no excuſe for me that I have warned him not to kill the perſon againſt whom he is enraged. I might have known he would not have liſtened to my counſel. So if I put the emblems of Chriſt's body and blood into the hands of impenitent ſinners, I may warn and warn, they are mad, and will not take warning, but ruſh upon their ruin. Suppoſe there is a madman ſtanding in an apothecary's ſhop, while the apothecary is mixing up a doſe of poiſon in a liquor of which the madman is very fond—the mandman aſks for a drink of it—the apothecary tells him there is poiſon in it—and that it will ſurely kill him if he drink it—the madman inſiſts to have it, alleging that there is no fear, and that he can drink it without any injury—the apothecary ſtill aſſerts that it will kill him if he will drink it; but if he perſiſts in deſiring to have it, he will give it him, rather than diſoblige him—the madman reaches for it—the apothecary gives it, taking the madman, and thoſe preſent, and God himſelf to witneſs, that he is clear of his blood, for he hath faithfully warned him—the madman drinks—and dies. Reader, were you one of the jury to try the apothecary, would you clear him? Will the Lord clear him in his judgment? And in what does the apothecary differ from the paſtor, who puts the emblems of Chriſt's body and blood into the hands of impenitent ſinners? In nothing but in the degree of their guilt. The latter is the more guilty, inaſmuch as the ſhedding of the blood of Chriſt is a greater crime than the ſhedding of the blood of a mere man; and in as much as the murder of a ſoul is a greater crime, than the murder of the body. It is no excuſe that great as the crime of unworthy partaking of the Lord's ſupper is, it is nevertheleſs pardonable. This is altogether with God, whether he will grant pardon and repentance or not; and although the individual is afterwards pardoned, the paſtor's crime is not thereby mitigated. I have applied it particularly to the paſtor, but every church member is guilty, and will be accountable; for it is not to one or a few, but to the whole church, that Chriſt has committed the diſcipline of his houſe.

I believe that *debarring* or *fencing the tables*, and *giving of tokens*, like all other human expedients in religion, have been of the most serious injury *. It is a bungling expedient to supply the want of Scripture discipline, and an apostolically constituted church. If none but those who are credibly Christians, were admitted to church membership, what occasion would there be for tokens of admission, or debarring. They will take their seats around Christ's table, as naturally as children will seat themselves unasked around the table of their earthly father. Who dare debar any such? And who dare invite any other? The custom of debarring, under the appearance of excluding the unworthy, is, in reality, only a pretext for admitting worldly men, without seeming to share in their guilt. Church rulers dare not professedly admit unregenerate men, from fear of offending God, and they dare not candidly deny them admission, from fear of men. They have therefore found out a way to compromise the matter between God and the world, by *fencing the tables*. Thus, they avoid giving individual offence, and driving unregenerate men away from their society, and imagine themselves clear as to the crime of prostituting the ordinance of Christ. I ask, was ever this mean found effectual to preserve purity of communion? I am sure I have tried it in the most awful man-

* Every one who receives a token has the solemn declaration of church rulers, that they consider them as real Christians For if it is granted that none but real Christians have a right to this ordinance, of what is this a token, if not of their fitness, at least in the estimation of those from whom they receive it? Now, if church rulers give a token to any whom they do not upon good evidence consider to be Christians, they are guilty of the most awful deceiving of sinners that can be imagined. They lead them with a blind upon their eyes to the brink of a precipice, and tell them, as they are falling, that they are tumbling into perdition. I beseech those Christians who are engaged in this murderous business, to stop and reflect; to weigh this with seriousness and prayer. I believe that there are many who give tokens with a trembling heart, and a smiting conscience. Let them beware lest conscience, by the repetition of guilt, become callous and seared. Their state is awful, if it has ceased to smite.

ner in my power, and I do not know that it was in any degree effectual. Often, very often, the hardened unawakened ſinner will let all paſs through his ear as the path of an arrow through the air, while the weak and timid Chriſtian will take what is ſaid as againſt himſelf, and be diſcouraged. Indeed, they know very little of the human heart, who think that an unawakened ſinner will take ſuch a warning I have laboured ſeveral hours with individuals, without convincing them of their danger. Till the Lord open the eyes of their underſtanding, they will ſtill have ſome refuge of lies. How then could it be expected to prevail with a multitude, in a few minutes ſpeaking, before the adminiſtration of the ſupper? I demand that thoſe who practiſe it will produce me either precept or example, either expreſſed or implied, for debarring and tokens of admiſſion at the Lord's ſupper. If this cannot be produced, I argue that that church which cannot maintain apoſtolical purity, without human expedients is not apoſtolically conſtituted. When I ſee a wall ſupported by a buttreſs, I judge it has not a good foundation. When I ſee a human invention employed to prop an ordinance of Chriſt, I form a ſimilar judgment.

But not only is the neceſſity of pure communion proved from the character of the members of the apoſtolical churches, and direct Scripture precept—the very model of the apoſtolical churches could not be otherwiſe preſerved. Chriſt's laws are not at all calculated to govern the devil's ſubjects. Spiritual laws will take no hold of carnal men. If there are unregenerate members admitted and retained, they will throw all into confuſion. They will ſtop the equability of the church's motion, and whenever the fire of temptation begins to burn, the houſe will fall with a crash in the midſt of the flames. If they are not excluded, a majority muſt inſtantly be ſubſtituted for unanimity; human laws and human ſanctions muſt be ſubſtituted for thoſe of the New Teſtament. From one ſtep to another, they will arrive to a full grown antichriſt, and the more heads he will have, the more monſtrous will he be.

I may add, there are ordinances of Chriſt which cannot be attended to, if ſtrict purity of communion is not preſerved, 1 Cor. vii. 1.—That civil diſputes ſhould be determined by the church, is an apoſtolical ordinance, for the neglect of which, the Corinthians are ſeverely reproved. But this is an ordinance which no church can ever obſerve, if they admit unregenerate men to membership. Such perſons will yield to the deciſion of the church, if it be in their favour; but if it be againſt them, they will ſhew little reſpect to the determination. Neither does the apoſtle's reaſoning hold good with reſpect to ſuch as judge, for *they* will not "*judge the world.*" Something like this, may, in ſmaller matters, be attempted in a mixed communion, among a few individuals, generally poor, and not able to maintain law-ſuits, having little civil intercourſe; but can never effectually take place in all caſes, except purity of communion be ſtrictly adhered to.

Mutual exhortation in church meetings *, is another apoſtolical ordinance, 1 Cor. xiv. 29.—1 Theſſ. v. 11. Let any preſbyterian congregation give this liberty to private individuals, and they will ſoon ſee the houſe in flames. The wood, the hay, and the ſtubble, would inſtantly take fire, and it would be altogether impoſſible to preſerve any ſort of order or decorum. This would ſhiver them, as a cedar in Lebanon is ſplintered by the lightning. None but the children of Chriſt could bear or improve ſuch a privilege.—Now, that church which cannot bear an apoſtolical inſtitution, is not apoſtolically conſtituted.

* As hypocrites will occaſionally find admittance into the churches of Chriſt, ſuch ordinances as theſe, ſeem wiſely calculated to detect them. That which appears to worldly churches the moſt exceptionable in theſe ordinances, is, in reality, their great perfection, and prove their heavenly birth. They afford an expeditious way to diſcover, and exclude carnal profeſſors. They are alſo uſeful to diſcipline the true ſoldiers of Jeſus; they grind off their aſperities, accuſtom them to forbearance, exerciſe their patience, and improve all their graces.

CHAPTER XI.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Many who look upon purity of communion as a desirable thing, and go a certain length in effecting it, do not aim at a ſtrict ſeparation, apprehending the attempt to be either fruitleſs or dangerous.—Some go ſo far as to ſhield themſelves under Scripture example: I was once of this number myſelf. I ſhall therefore employ this chapter in anſwering the objections uſually alleged againſt any attempt to effect a pure church.

Objection I. It is ſaid, "We cannot know men's "hearts; if they are ſober and decent in their external "conduct, and acknowledge their belief of the orthodox "doctrines, we can go no farther."

This objection, if there was any thing in it, would go to ſhew that Chriſt has given a command to the churches, which it would not be in their power to put into practice. If Chriſt has ſaid, "Give not that which is holy unto dogs," he ſuppoſes we are able to diſtinguiſh the perſons whom he intends, otherwiſe his advice is unimportant. A phyſician cannot look into the inner part of the human body, to ſee what is the diſeaſe of his patient, yet he judges of this, by the ſymptoms and appearances he beholds. Juſt ſo are we to judge of the human heart. If the fountain be ſalt, ſo will the ſtreams; if the ſtreams are freſh, we may judge that the fountain has alſo been made freſh. Our Lord tells us that a tree is known by its fruits. If there is faith in the heart, there will be obedience in the life. If there be ſpiritual life, there will be ſome ſymptoms of it. The true penitent will bring forth fruits meet for repentance. The

man who is born of the Spirit, will know the things of the Spirit, and will lead a ſpiritual life. If he be renewed in the image of him that created him, he will evidence this by his knowledge, righteouſneſs, and holineſs. If he loves Chriſt, he will keep his commandments. If his heart is with God, his perſon will not uſually be found in the company of the wicked. If he loves him that begat, he will alſo love them that are begotten, and prefer their company and converſation to that of all others. In ſhort, if there be a real change of heart, it will manifeſt itſelf in the life. In ſome inſtances, ariſing from particular circumſtances, there may be difficulty; and if, after much prayer and neceſſary inveſtigation, a church is deceived in any inſtance, it is not guilty. I dare ſay if the members of a church would take as much trouble in this, as they do in giving out their money upon intereſt, they would ſeldom be deceived. They are not apt, out of exceſſive charity, to hazard it with a man of a merely ſpecious appearance, till they enquire minutely into his circumſtances and character.

Obj. 2. I have heard ſome allege, "that if they "would go to ſuch ſtrictneſs, they could admit very "few."

I perfectly agree with them in this ſentiment: but this objection is not an alleviation, but a dreadful aggravation of the crime. Such paſtors are building a Babel, not a temple of God. When their work will be tried by the fire of the great day, it will be burned up, and they ſhall ſuſtain a dreadful loſs; and be ſaved, admitting they are the diſciples of Chriſt, with the utmoſt difficulty. But this is not the remedy, but the very cauſe of their fewneſs. If a church is once formed upon the apoſtolical model, and walking in the commandments and ordinances of the goſpel, it is impoſſible, but they will increaſe. Though at firſt there ſhould be no more than a dozen, the Lord will be adding daily to them, ſuch *as are ſaved.* The preſence of Chriſt ſhall be with them, and continuing in prayer, they ſhall be multiplied; for whatever two of them agree in aſking, they

ſhall receive. I am convinced, from experience, that this is the caſe. Since I ceaſed to proſtitute the Lord's ſupper at home and abroad, my labours have been more viſibly bleſſed, and I have had more evidence of a work of grace going on, than I had in the whole five years of my miniſtry; and I am convinced that if a goſpel church is formed amongſt us, and ruled by the laws of Chriſt, we ſhall have ſtill more promiſing proſpects. But be this as it may, as to myſelf, I hope I would not again adminiſter the Lord's ſupper in the ſame promiſcuous way, for any earthly conſideration.

Obj. 3. It is ſaid, that "this ſort of ſtrictneſs will "drive ſinners away from the goſpel altogether, and "therefore will defeat its own end."

What a pity that Chriſt had not the benefit of the advice of theſe ſage counſellors! he would not have given a command ſo contrary to his own intention. Such objectors may have an othodox creed, but the objection ariſes out of preſumption and unbelief. Not to mention that the rejection of unregenerate perſons, is often overruled to their converſion. our buſineſs is to obey God, and leave events to himſelf Have we a greater intereſt, or are we more heartily concerned in enlarging his church, than he is himſelf? He hath the hearts of all men in his hands, and he turneth them as rivers of waters. He can make the moſt violent enemies, the moſt devoted friends of his goſpel, whenever he pleaſes. If he ſays, "Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?" the anſwer would be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Every human invention to enlarge and ſupport the church of Chriſt, will not only utterly prove abortive. but generally will have a tendency directly the reverſe of what is propoſed. The great encouragement given to the heathen to renounce their religion, buried Chriſtianity in a heap of rubbiſh. in the time of Conſtantine. And in every age the admiſſion of impure members, to make a party reſpectable from their numbers, has had the worſt effects. While the life of thoſe that are ſpiritual is almoſt extinguiſhed, the unregenerate become ſecured and hardened. Nothing can tend more

effectually to retard the progress of the gospel, and keep the eyes of the multitude continually blinded, than to give them the Christian name and privileges, whilst they are still the servants of Satan. They think they are safe, and believe they are Christians, though not so good as some others. If their minister is so faithful as to lay open their character in public, and shew them their danger, they will either shuffle it off upon their neighbour, or apologise to themselves for their own conduct. Those who are accustomed to examine the hopes of sinners, will find that admission to what they call Christian privileges, is a very prevalent ground of hope. If all the churches of Christ were to treat the world as heathens, till they are born again, it would be a likely mean in the hand of the Spirit to rouse them to inquiry, and lead them to repentance. Even those who are in the habit of refusing admission to persons of a scandalous character, very frequently do it in an improper manner. They ground their refusal, not upon their want of conversion, but their irregularities, or their not submitting to rules. This tends to mislead the sinner, and keep him ignorant of his real state; whereas, if he were faithfully told that his non-admission was the consequence of his want of the *new birth*, and not of the straitened rules of a party, he would be more likely to receive it with benefit, and even less irritation. Often the minister will throw the blame upon the session, and they again upon their rules, from a cowardly dispositition, lest they should give offence. Thus the person is led to believe that the fault lies more in the straitness of the rules, than in himself. The placing of his admission or rejection upon his discharge of certain external duties, has the same mischievous effect. He is led to look upon this, not as an evidence of his state, but as forming his title to heaven. One thing I would ask at those who make this objection; let them answer it candidly to their own conscience. Whether are you more afraid that this would lessen the church of Christ, or *the stipend?* Whether are you more afraid of injuring the cause of Christ, or the credit of *your party?*

Obj. 4. It is pleaded in defence of promiscuous com-

munion, "that Judas was admitted to the Lord's table." Judas was once a pillar upon which I thought I could safely rest my defence; but since I have more maturely and impartially considered the matter, I have entirely given that up. We are never in a likely way to obtain truth as long as we are searching for a justification of our own conduct, rather than the mind of the Spirit. I am afraid that there are many who examine this question in this temper. A drowning man will catch at any twig before he will sink. Thus many, overwhelmed by positive Scripture precept, perhaps producing some qualms of conscience, catch at Judas to keep them above water. They do not see any thing to extricate themselves from their difficulty, and because, in their present situation, they cannot comply, they too easily impose upon themselves, as to the sin of setting the word of God at variance with itself. There is certainly a difficulty in determining whether Judas was, or was not, present at the institution of the supper. It would appear to me, from the most impartial examination of the gospels which record the relation, that he was not. We know Scripture cannot contradict itself; and when it seems to do so, that analysis must be admitted, which is most conformable to the general tenor of the whole. If, then, there are innumerable passages to prove the duty of pure communion, and if the presence of Judas at the supper be contrary to this, that passage which seems to say he was, must be understood so as to agree with that which positively, or even apparently says he was not. I think also that Luke's account can more easily be explained in consistency with John's, than John's in consistency with the order of the narration of Luke. The inversion of order in the narration of facts, is no singular occurrence in the gospels; but John states the fact positively, circumstantially, and minutely. John xiii. 30. "He then having received *the sop* *, went *immediately* out." To make Luke agree with this, we have nothing to do but what must be done in many other cases, to suppose an inversion of order in the narration. But this I mention, rather to reconcile the evangelists, than

* This was in eating the passover.

to support my argument in the point under debate. I do not think, that in order to prove the duty of pure communion, there is any necessity to exclude Judas from the first supper. What was Judas? He was a polished hypocrite. What is a hypocrite? Not a man who pretends to be religious, signs an orthodox creed, and leads a heterodox life, but a man to all human appearance a real Christian, and for a time walking as one, though in heart and in the sight of God an impenitent sinner. Such was Judas. There was not a more plausible character among the apostles than this very man. None of his brethren suspected him more than themselves.—Even when our Lord declared that one of them should betray him, their language was not, "Lord, is it Judas?" but, "Lord, is it I?" Now such characters might be in any church without the smallest blame being attachable to either church rulers, or church members. If the church receives them as real Christians, it is guiltless, though they are like Judas. This, however, is no apology for those who admit carnal men, who discover no evidence of conversion, nay frequently of whom they have no hopes at all. It is argued, that though Judas was a hypocrite, yet that our Lord knew him to be such. A fact most unquestionable; but our Lord's omniscience is no rule of conduct for us, nor did he act according to it in many other cases. He had various and important reasons for choosing this hypocrite to the apostleship, and the same he might have had for allowing him to take his seat at his supper. Our Lord, by acting as the administrator of this ordinance, had no need to avail himself of his omniscience, by forbidding Judas to partake; because in this he could have been no example to us, as we had not the same means of detecting hypocrites. Besides, he might design to shew us, that if such characters as Judas would afterwards get admission into any of his churches, they would be blameless. The guilt, in this matter, is not in receiving hypocrites, but in retaining them, after they discover their true character. Judas the hypocrite might be a church member, but Judas the betrayer never was, nor could be. Granting every thing, then, that the abettors of impure communion themselves can demand from the case of Judas,

to what does it amount? that a hypocrite may be admitted to the Lord's table without sin in the church. Will any say that because Christ knew this man to be an hypocrite, that therefore we may admit persons whom *we* know to be hypocrites; if we know them to be hypocrites, then they are no longer hypocrites; for we cannot know this as Christ knew it, by looking into their hearts, but from their discovering this by their lives and conversation. The case of Judas cannot fairly be drawn any farther. Besides, if it is alleged to justify the admission of members who give evidence that they are not partakers of the grace of the gospel, it will set Christ the master, and Paul the servant at variance. The latter positively commands them not so much as eat with one who is called a brother, when once he discovers an inconsistency between his character and profession, 1 Cor. v. 11. Timothy is strictly charged to withdraw from those "who had a *form* of godliness, but denied the power thereof."

But can there be any thing more truly ridiculous than for those who justify impure communion by the example of Judas, to spend whole hours in debarring and fencing? If our Lord did not debar Judas, and if this shews the propriety of admitting persons whom we know to be unworthy, the conclusion is, that it would be improper to forbid them. If the sober *worldling* is admitted, I ask, by what authority is the drunkard, the swearer, the fornicator, &c. denied admission? Ah! brethren, you must be at a great loss for a foundation, when you are obliged to build upon Judas. It must be an ill built house, in which Judas himself is the chief corner-stone.

Obj. 5. The parable of the tares and the wheat, is usually one of the bulwarks of impure churches *.—

* For a full, clear, and satisfactory explanation of this parable, see "Mr Innes's Reasons for separating from the church of Scotland." I decline a full explanation of this, and some other things, as they are largely treated in that pamphlet, which I think should be in the hands of all who wish for information on this subject.

But this objection is founded on a misapplication of the parable. It supposes that the field is the church, whereas our Lord himself expressly explains it to mean the *world*. The tares are considered as church members; whereas, this would make our Lord's injunction contrary to that of the apostle Paul, "Purge out the old leaven." "Do ye not judge them that are within?" It was also the devil who sowed them, and not Christ's servants by mistake. Those, who from this, plead for promiscuous admission, acknowledge themselves to be, not the servants of Christ, but of Satan, employed in sowing the tare-seed in Christ's field, while his servants sleep. But without spending time in shewing why it cannot have this interpretation, I will just briefly point out what I take to be its obvious and consistent meaning. The wheat represents the children of God; the tares the children of the wicked one; they both grow in the same field, the *world*. The servants of Christ are not to endeavour to root out the latter, lest in doing so, they would root out the wheat. The design of the parable, is to shew the impropriety of persecution, from this reason, that if the wicked of one generation were cut off, thousands of the children of God, who are to spring from them, would thereby be prevented from coming into being. The lives of the wicked are now preserved, because they are the ancestors of multitudes, who shall turn to God in the latter days. This I take to be also the meaning of Matt. xxiv. 22. "For the *elect's sake*, those days shall be shortened." By *elect* here, we are, in my opinion, principally to understand the *unborn* elect. The Jews, who escaped at the siege of Jerusalem, were spared, because they were to be the fathers of all those Jews who shall turn to God in the restoration. God could have preserved the elect that were alive in the time of that siege, in various ways. But in what other way could the prophecies of the restoration of the Jews. have been accomplished, than by preserving a number of that wicked generation, for the purpose of introducing his future people into existence? If all the Jews had been cut off then, what would have become of those countless thousands and millions of their descendents, that shall serve Christ in

their return? The Jews, since their rejection of Christ, have been preserved, perhaps *chiefly* for the sake of their future offspring. This is clearly expressed in the prophecy of Isaiah lxv. 8. As the unripe bunch of grapes is preserved for the sake of the wine that it shall afterwards yield, so God preserves the Jewish nation for the sake of their future descendents, who are to serve him.

CHAPTER XII.

Additional Reasons for Separating from the General Synod.

Though I had no objection to the government of classical presbytery, and could effect purity of communion in my own congregation, without experiencing any hindrance from foreign interference, still I could not with a good conscience remain a member of the general synod. I have many reasons for this conviction; a few of them I will here state.

1. "How can a man mount a very high hill with a "weighty burthen, having several hundreds pulling him "back by the skirts? Is it not much better to climb up "the precipice in company with others who are going "the same way, to go arm in arm, the strong bearing "the weak, so that if a foot slip, we may not be dashed "to pieces by a fall?" The former was exactly my situation, the whole weight of my connexion being as a clog upon me, retarding my progress, by their laws, example, and spirit. We have all too much inclination to indifference and negligence in our Lord's cause. There is no need of an external hindrance. "Can a man take fire into his bosom, and not be burned?" Who will say that the very society of men indifferent to religion, is not a strong temptation to relax exertion in the cause of Christ? But especially, if they are not only indifferent,

but inimical to the ſpreading of the goſpel, the danger is increaſed. If the religion of the Bible be called enthuſiaſm and madneſs, there is a ſtrong temptation to hide its peculiar features, and appear leſs zealous for its diffuſion. "Two cannot walk together except they are agreed." What concord, then, can there be between them and me? They view me with jealouſy, and I conſider them traitors to my maſter *.—My exertions for a revival of religion they think uſeleſs. Some ſuppoſe that I am actuated by a love of applauſe, while others, more friendly, think I am only mad. Now, in this ſituation, what mutual happineſs can there be from the ſociety of men ſo oppoſite in their views and conduct? We both contribute to make each other uncomfortable. I am ſure I have never ſuffered more acute pain in my life, than in their aſſemblies. I avoided their meetings as much as I could, for I always entered them with horror and reluctance. But of late, I underſtand they have determined that I ſhould not enjoy that liberty. Is it not, then, much better that I ſhould act ſeparately, for I am ſure they are not more offenſive to me, than I am to them? Shall I, for a morſel of bread, ſacrifice my own happineſs, and remain under continual reſtraint and temptation? "A man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things he poſſeſſes." He muſt be a very inexperienced Chriſtian indeed, who thinks that he does not need rather to be ſpurred than curbed in his courſe.

2. "I cannot be a member of the general ſynod, "without renouncing my Chriſtian liberty, and ſubmit-"ting my conſcience to be ruled and lorded over by "man." I am not allowed to be directed by my own conſcience in the ſervice of my maſter. I muſt act not on my own conviction of what is right and wrong, but

* When I involve the ſynod in a general cenſure, I always intend a majority of the members, and not every individual, becauſe a majority is the ſynod, and can rule the minority as they pleaſe. I pretend not to determine what may be the number of faithful ſervants of Chriſt in that connexion. For ſuch, whatever be our difference of opinion, I have the moſt cordial affection.

according to the caprice of others; nay of those I esteem as decided enemies to the cause of the Lord Jesus. I might get drunk frequently; associate with the most profligate; spend the Sabbath afternoons in gay parties; follow the world the whole week with my whole heart; preach against the peculiar doctrines of revelation; deny the very Lord and Saviour of men; attend the theatre, balls, and card parties; and still my brethren would extend their charity to me: except a formal charge would be brought against me by my own congregation, I might even pass unnoticed. Here human frailty, and freedom of inquiry, would plead my excuse. But if I would dare to preach the gospel out of my own bounds, or admit an evangelical minister of another denomination to occupy my pulpit, dreadful would be the thunder that would be hurled against me! Nothing less than public rebuke for the first, and suspension for the second commission of such *mortal sins*. "Whereas "it appears, that our laws respecting the admission of "men, not members of this body, or licentiates under "its care, to officiate for us, are too generally expressed "to be of any practical use: It is now enacted, that no "man, not a member of this body, or a licentiate under "its care (the presbytery of Antrim, and southern as-"sociation excepted,) shall be permitted to officiate for "us in our congregations, until he shall first submit his "credentials to the presbytery, in whose bounds he "wishes to preach, and until he shall be approved of by "the presbytery: and any minister of this body, viola-"ting this law, shall, for the first offence, be publicly "rebuked by his presbytery, before his congregation, "and for the second be suspended *ab officio, sine die*." If ever a child was known by its resemblance to the parent, this sure must be the daughter of the mother of harlots. This is her prominent feature: this is her very temper and genius. "O, ye Scribes and Pharisees, how long will ye make void the law of God by your traditions! In vain do you worship him, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Where is their authority for imposing such restraints upon the servants of the Lord? I cannot submit to this tyranny without calling men my master, contrary to the express command

of Jeſus. I am commanded " to ſtand faſt in the liberty with which he has made me free." Though the apoſtle ſpeaks this immediately of the Jewiſh yoke, yet, as no ſcripture is of any private interpretation, it equally forbids any human impoſition, in the things of God. When Chriſt has left us free, we are not to allow any man or body of men to bind us, or even to bind ourſelves. Every human reſtraint in religion is uſurpation and treaſon. A Chriſtian, indeed, is ſometimes to decline uſing his liberty, to avoid ſtumbling his weak brother, but he is not even in this caſe to come under bondage to him, ſtill leſs is he to come under reſtraint to pleaſe thoſe who are enemies to the *pure goſpel of ſalvation.*

I am truly concerned for the ſpiritual darkneſs of my native land. While the work of the Lord is flouriſhing in both parts of Britain, there is in this iſland as yet but little done. Ah! the thouſands that are periſhing for lack of knowledge! What profligacy of manners do we ſee every where abounding! I am convinced that there is no other remedy for the evil but the *unadulterated goſpel of Chriſt.* Shall I then ſubmit to be crooped up in a corner, and reſtrained by human fetters from lending a brand to reſcue my brethren from the pit of deſtruction? " Time is ſhort;" the day of work is but a blink; I muſt ſoon give an account of my ſtewardſhip, and I know that however much I may incur the diſpleaſure of men, however great may be my temporal loſs, in the end I ſhall not repent the ſtep I have taken. I know that God judgeth not as man judgeth. I know, indeed, it is ſaid that I might employ all my time in my own congregation; but I anſwer, that I may do much abroad, and not do the leſs at home. I believe we will generally find, that thoſe who do moſt abroad, likewiſe do moſt in their own congregation. It is my duty to feed the poor of my own neighbourhood rather than thoſe at a diſtance; but it would be a hard matter, if I was ſo bound that I could not give a halfpenny to a ſtarving beggar on my journey. Beſides, the public preaching of the goſpel is that part of the office in which I take peculiar delight, and in which I am never weary.

The hireling may work his hours, but he that loves Jeſus, ſhould, like him, "go about doing good;" like him it ſhould be his very "meat and drink, to do the will of his heavenly Father."

3. "I do not find myſelf juſtified in recognizing as "miniſters, thoſe whom I conſider as deſtitute of the "qualifications deemed eſſential by an apoſtle." A biſhop muſt be blameleſs, the huſband of one wife, *vigilant*, *ſober*, *of good behaviour*, given to hoſpitality, *apt* (*rather fit*) *to teach*—*not given to wine*—*no ſtriker* —not *greedy of filthy lucre*, but patient—not a brawler *nor covetous*—one that ruleth well his own houſe, having his children in ſubjection with all gravity. (For if a man know not how to rule his own houſe, how ſhall he take care of the church of God?) Not a *novice*, leſt being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he muſt have *a good report of them which are without*, leſt he fall into reproach and the ſnare of the devil," 1 Tim. iii. 2—7. "A biſhop muſt not be ſelf-willed—*not ſoon angry*—*a lover of good men*—*juſt*, *holy*, *temperate*—*holding faſt the faithful word*, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by ſound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainſayers," Titus i. 7—9. I forbear to make the application. Suffice it to ſay, that if theſe are eſſential qualifications in a paſtor, I cannot recognize as brethren many of the members of the general ſynod.

4. "A Calviniſt and a Socinian or Arian can with "no propriety worſhip together." They do not addreſs the ſame God. When they unite in prayer, they are like a friend to the Pretender, and another of king George, drinking *the king*, as a toaſt, when each intended his own favourite. They do not addreſs the ſame being, though they uſe the ſame name. If I addreſs the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, as my God, he that denies the Godhead of the Son and Spirit, muſt look upon me as an idolater. In return, I look upon him as an atheiſt. "He that denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father; he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that hath ſent him." When he prayeth,

he addreſſes not the Jehovah of the Scripture, but an idol of his own creation, as different from the true God, as Jupiter or Apollo *. His God is as really of his own making, as if he had hewn him out of wood or ſtone. He ſteals from the Scripture account of the true God, ſome of his properties, and thoſe attributes that ſuit him beſt. When he robs him of his juſtice, and abuſively extends his mercy, he can diſpenſe with the ſacrifice of Jeſus; he has got a god to his mind: an idol of his own imagination. This god he loves, becauſe this god does not hate ſin; but the Jehovah of the Scriptures he hates, becauſe he is the enemy of ſin, and "hath revealed his wrath againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men." In what then are we agreed? Not even in the God we worſhip: not in the way of ſalvation. How improper is it, then, for us to make each other the organ of prayer? How can we cooperate, ſeeing our principles are ſo entirely oppoſite? If each of us be conſcientious, we muſt be at conſtant war. With as great propriety, might the French and Engliſh officers meet in a council of war, before an engagement, to concert the meaſures that each were to adopt, as people of ſuch oppoſite ſentiments to ſit in the ſame ſynod.

5. "By remaining in connexion with the ſynod, I "contribute to deceive the public, as to the radical "difference between my principles, and thoſe maintained "by many in the ſynod." My example by continuing in that connexion, might be the means of keeping ſome of the people of Chriſt under the miniſtry of thoſe who corrupt the goſpel. It is natural for people to judge that there cannot be any momentous points in which we differ, or we would not continue to co-operate and acknowledge each other as brethren in Chriſt. This I

* The ſame thing will hold againſt making any unregenerate man the organ of prayer. When ſuch men are ſet up to offer the prayers of an aſſembly, as they "know not God," ſo "they worſhip they know not what." They cannot pray with the Spirit, and conſequently they cannot pray at all. Thoſe who join them are partakers in their abominations.

know to be the caſe. The generality of private Chriſtians in the general ſynod, have no conception that we differ ſo materially. Suppoſe, then, I could remain a member of ſynod, without injury to myſelf, yet I am guilty of deceiving others. If I think that any miniſters of that body, are wolves in ſheep's cloathing, not feeding, but devouring the flock, I am a partaker of their ſoul murder, if I do not give the alarm, and warn the ſheep to fly.

What is the uſe of the 8th chapter of 1 Cor. to us? Does it not teach us, that, if in any particular inſtance, the uſe of our Chriſtian liberty may prove an occaſion of ſtumbling to weak brethren, we ought to forego it, rather than he ſhould be injured? If I ſit in the idol's temple, eating the fleſh of animals offered in ſacrifice, though I eat it ſimply to ſatisfy my hunger, knowing that there is no divinity in the idol, and that the meat cannot be rendered in itſelf impure, by this improper uſe, yet my weak brother ſeeing me there, partaking with idolaters, is led to think, that I am joining them in their worſhip, and by my example, is emboldened to eat it as a ſacrifice to the idol.—"Through my knowledge ſhall the weak brother periſh for whom Chriſt died?" Suppoſe, then, that my connexion with the ſynod, was a matter not ſinful in itſelf, yet by its conſequences, it becomes ſinful. Many may be encouraged by my example, to ſit under a miniſtry, in which the goſpel is depraved, or hidden. If I ſhould be the occaſion of ſtumbling one of Chriſt's little ones, the loſs I would ſuſtain in the day of the Lord Jeſus, would be infinitely greater than all I can loſe by leaving the ſynod. Awful will be our reſponſibility, and it is required, above all things, in a ſteward, that he be faithful. If this be not a lawful application of Scripture, I know of no uſe that this chapter can be at preſent.

6. "My connexion with the ſynod is contrary to the "law of love, and the duty I owe the members of it as "men." If I believe, that "Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God;" and if I believe that few of them evidence ſuch a change; nay, if

I know many of them to deny and ridicule this truth as enthuſiaſm, I would not be their friend, if in any thing my conduct would lead them to believe, that I conſidered their ſituation to be leſs dangerous, than in reality I know it to be. Now, as long as I remain a member of ſynod and act with them as brethren in Chriſt, it is impoſſible for them to think that I am really in earneſt, as to the importance of my views of the truths of the goſpel. Beſides, there are many who would ſubſcribe perhaps every doctrine of the goſpel, of whoſe ſtate I have no better hopes. Such perſons, then, would have reaſon to complain of me in the judgment of the great day, that I acted an unfriendly part towards them; that while I conſidered them as "in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity," I acted with them as miniſters of Chriſt; by which means they were led to conclude that I could have no very unfavourable opinion of them. I know I will be charged with a want of *charity of ſentiment*, when I expreſs ſuch an opinion of the ſynod. Charity, however, is not a matter of opinion, but of feeling, and a man may have the pureſt love for another, while he is moſt ſtrongly convinced of his guilt and danger. A juror may have every wiſh that the criminal may be acquitted, yet he may, by evidence, be obliged to join in the verdict, "*guilty*." Shall I go paſt my neighbour's houſe at night, ſeeing it on fire, and not awake him, leſt I ſhould diſturb or grieve him? Shall I rather ſuffer him to be conſumed in the flames, than alarm him? Yet this is the murderous charity for which many plead; that, while we have the cleareſt evidence that men are living without God, we ſhould believe, or feign to believe, that they may be ſaved in their ſins. In other words, we hope God is a liar—that he will not do as he has ſaid. Dr Johnſon ſaid, that every man was to be held unlearned, till he proved the contrary. The obſervation is equally juſt when applied to religion. No man has a right to be eſteemed a Chriſtian, till his fruits prove it. What would we think of the man who would ſay, that in the judgment of charity, he looked upon all, or the greater part of men to be learned? The ſame ſhould we think of the man who profeſſes to believe, that men are

Chriſtians, who give no evidence of the fact. We have the word of unerring wiſdom, declaring that all men are "by nature the children of wrath;" until we have evidence that they are born again, and adopted into the family of God, we are not warranted to look upon them as Chriſtians. Eternal life is the worſt I wiſh to any member of the ſynod, or to any man on earth; but if I believe God, I muſt believe that all "who *know not God*, and *obey not the goſpel* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

7. "I cannot conſcientiouſly join in licenſing and "ordaining thoſe whom I know do not poſſeſs the pre-"requiſite qualifications, pointed out in the word of "God." Paul ſtates theſe minutely to Timothy and Titus. I do not think that it is right to give our countenance to any candidates, who do not anſwer to this deſcription. The candidate for "the office of a biſhop," muſt not be even a *novice*, or *new convert*, leſt from his inexperience he ſhould fall into temptation from the natural pride of the human heart *. But if it be improper to appoint *newly converted men* to the charge of a flock, how dreadful muſt be the ſin of appointing the blind to lead the blind, and unregenerate men to feed the flock of Chriſt? Paul ſays to Timothy, (1 Tim. v. 22.) "lay hands ſuddenly upon no man, neither be partakers of other men's ſins: keep thyſelf pure." It appears, then, that thoſe who give their ſanction to unworthy men to preach the goſpel, are partakers of their ſins. They ſhare with them in the guilt of all the evil they commit in deſtroying the ſouls of men. He does not direct him to ordain no man without ſubſcribing a human confeſſion of faith. This could have been done in an inſtant; if this had

* Thoſe who juſtify the appointment of unconverted men to preach the goſpel, and take charge of a church of Chriſt, from the example of Judas, would do well to conſider the import of this portion of Scripture. If a man newly converted be unfit for the paſtor's office, much more is he who is not converted at all.

been the teſt, there would have been no need of delay. The caution implies not only that Timothy ſhould not ordain perſons of a ſcandalous character, but even that perſons who ſeemed to poſſeſs the requiſite qualifications, ſhould not be appointed to the paſtoral office, till they had given ſufficient evidences that they were what they ſeemed to be. All unregenerate men are the ſervants of Satan; and let them *ſubſcribe* and *ſwear* what they will, Satan they will ſerve, "until they are turned from darkneſs unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." How dreadful then is the crime of giving a public ſanction to ſuch men, as the ſervants of Chriſt! They will preach orthodoxy or heterodoxy as beſt ſuits their temporal intereſt, but though they have *the form*, they have none of the power of godlineſs. They may preach a dead, dry ſyſtem, but being blind, they cannot lead the blind; and having no ſpiritual organs to "diſcern the things of the Spirit, they cannot know them." I acknowledge the moſt conſcientious may be deceived, but it is really awful to hear ſome good men pleading for the propriety of ſending out unconverted men to preach the goſpel, becauſe Judas was an hypocrite. It is no wonder, then, that ſome ſects, with all their boaſted orthodoxy, have little more of the life and power of godlineſs than thoſe who do not make ſuch high pretenſions. Once acknowledge the principle that the ſervants of Satan, if they are orthodox and ſober, are proper perſons to feed the flock of Chriſt, and in a ſhort time deadneſs and torpor will pervade the body. All the zeal of individuals will not be able to keep it alive. A profeſſion of orthodoxy was not the teſt uſed by the apoſtles. "And when James, and Cephas, and John, who ſeemed to be pillars, *perceived the grace that was given unto me*, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowſhip, that we ſhould go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumciſion," Gal. ii. 9. The evidence of his qualifications was not the *ſubſcription of a formula*, but *his appearing to have received the grace of God*. I cannot ſee how an unconverted orthodox miniſter is a leſs dangerous man than he who is moſt openly hoſtile to the doctrines of the goſpel. In my opinion the former is

the more dangerous of the two, as men are less aware of him. Paul, speaking of the deacons, (1 Tim. iii. 10.) says, "Let these also first be proved." This shews the great care that should be taken in choosing church officers. Their acknowledgment of the leading doctrines of the gospel is not given as a test. Even persons that appear to possess the necessary qualifications, are not to be hastily appointed to office; *they must be proved.* "These also," that is, deacons as well as pastors. If this reasoning be just, it is applicable to all the denominations of presbyterians, with which I am acquainted. But I am not obliged to rest any part of this argument upon the sinfulness of licensing and ordaining merely *unconverted men.* As a member of the general synod, I may be forced to join in licensing and ordaining men whose *characters* and *doctrines* I condemn. I may be obliged to be the very organ of licensing and ordaining a man who preaches an opposite gospel from what I believe to be true. What a monstrous inconsistency is here! If I believe the doctrines I preach, I must be convinced that I am sending out a murderer instead of a physician. Am I not guilty, then, of all the blood he spills? Surely I am partaker of this man's sins. Yes. I take shame and confusion of face to myself, that I have so long sanctioned my master's enemies. I acknowledge myself to have hitherto been a partaker of the guilt of those who are the "enemies of the cross of Christ, whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things."

8. "I have a positive and express command to "separate from a corrupt church." 2 Cor. vi. 14,—18. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in *them;* and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore

come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*, and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my ſons and daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty." The Corinthians are here commanded to ſeparate from their unbelieving and idolatrous neighbours; to abandon their worſhip, and form no intimate alliances of any kind with them. This command is given to me as well as to the Corinthians. for I am no otherwiſe addreſſed but as a member of the apoſtolical churches. All unconverted men are idolaters, and unbelievers, and a connexion with them is even more dangerous in a country called Chriſtian, than in a heathen country. The ſame reaſon alſo that forbids the marriage of believers with unbelievers, will equally forbid our connexion in church communion with ſuch. It is alſo exceedingly obvious, that though the command is particularly levelled againſt joining in the idolatrous worſhip of the heathens, it is expreſſed in a general manner, ſo as to include the view I now give of it, as literally, and with as ſtrict preciſion, as the other. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." This will hold not only in this or that inſtance, but it is univerſally applicable to the formation of any intimate union of believers with unbelievers, eſpecially in church communion. Beſides, there is not an argument here uſed to ſhew the impropriety of this union but what equally applies in this view. All believers are righteous, all unbelievers are unrighteous. All believers are light, all unbelievers are darkneſs. Chriſt dwells in all believers, Belial dwells in all unbelievers; he is the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience. Unbelievers of every deſcription have different views, objects of purſuit, pleaſures, and averſions, from believers. They have no common ground upon which they can found any intimate union. Every believer is a temple of God, which he inhabits through the Spirit; idols of one kind or other inhabit the heart of every unbeliever. I would juſt further obſerve, that if ſome of thoſe who have long ſucceſsfully quoted this portion of Scripture to ſhew the duty of ſeparating from the general ſyſtem, would look a little more narrowly into it, they might find that they ſhould

carry their separation to a greater length. I think it fairly condemns the admission of all carnal men to church communion. It is an union of believers with unbelievers, not merely of orthodox with heterodox, which is here forbidden. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

A similar command have I in Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." This indeed is immediately spoken of the mother of harlots, but it will equally hold with respect to each of her daughters. If we are to leave one corrupt church, we are certainly to leave another. If our remaining in communion with the spiritual Babylon would make us partakers of her sins, and subject us to share her plagues, the same reasoning will prove that we are partakers of the sins of any corrupt church with which we are connected. If we must come out of the one to free us from her sins, the same thing will be necessary with respect to every other. As long as we countenance them we are sharers of their guilt, and liable to share their punishment.

Paul gives Timothy (2 Tim. iii. 1,—5.) a list of characters who would assume a profession of religion, without the power of it. From these, he positively commands him to "turn away." Now, if there be any such characters evidently in the general synod, it is equally my duty to withdraw from them. This is another passage which the advocates of impure ministerial and Christian communion would do well to consider. These might be very orthodox men; they had a "form of godliness." They would have no objection to subscribe the Westminster Confession. Most of them appear also, not to have been openly immoral. They might have a very sanctified air in a church court. Yet from such, there is a peculiar necessity to withdraw; from such there is a peculiar danger. When men of such a character appear, and are acknowledged in a church of Christ, "the times are perilous." The devout worldling is more dangerous than the openly pro-

fane. Timothy is alſo commanded to withdraw from every teacher who would teach otherwiſe than the apoſtle had directed. "And conſent not to wholeſome words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the doctrine which is according to godlineſs," 1 Tim. vi. 3,—5. Certainly, then, I am not juſtifiable in remaining in connexion with the general ſynod.

In writing to the church of the Theſſalonians, Paul gives them this charge: "Now I command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye withdraw yourſelves from every brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." What Chriſt ſpeaks to a church in general, is ſpoken to each individual, in particular. Though claſſical preſbytery were of God's appointing, yet, if there were but one diſorderly member in the general ſynod, and I could not get him removed, it would be my duty to withdraw; otherwiſe I am a partaker of his ſins. As long as I am a member of that body, I am an accomplice with every irregular perſon in it, whether miniſter or private member *. We are poſitively commanded to "have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but to reprove them," Eph. v 11. This precept we can never obey, while we hold profeſſed communion with unbelievers. Nay, ſo far from holding communion with them in the ordinances of Chriſt, we are not even allowed to have a friendly intimacy with thoſe that are called brethren, if their characters belie their profeſſion. This would be a ſcandal to the religion of Chriſt, and would give occaſion to the wicked to blaſpheme. I cannot, then, be a member of the general ſynod and an obedient ſervant of Chriſt.

* If there be any juſtice in this remark, it is a conſiderable argument againſt an aſſociated church government. We would in that caſe, be accountable for the conduct of thoſe of whom we could not poſſibly have any knowledge.

CHAPTER XIII.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

HAVING in the laſt chapter given ſome reaſons for ſeparating from a corrupt church, I will conclude this pamphlet by taking notice of a few objections that have been frequently urged upon me to diſſuade me from giving up my connexion with the general ſynod.

1. "It is ſaid that a material error prevailed in the "churches of Galatia, and that in writing to them, "the apoſtle does not command one part of them to ſe- "parate from the other, upon the ſuppoſition that "the majority would not return to the truth—that in "caſe the majority of the Corinthian church had taken "part with the inceſtuous man, and refuſed to obey "the apoſtolical injunction, Paul gives no command "to the minority to ſeparate from the majority—and "that our Lord, in reproving the churches of Aſia, "does not command any ſeparation of individuals in "caſe the greater part in any church might not return "to their duty."

With reſpect to each of theſe inſtances, I anſwer, that there is not one of them parallel to my ſituation. Theſe churches, with all their declenſions and corruptions, were ſtill churches of Chriſt, apoſtolically conſtituted, and the bulk of them real, though cenſurable ſaints. Conſequently, when their errors would be laid before them, they would unite in correcting them. But the matter is widely different with reſpect to a church neither upon the apoſtolical model, nor conſtituted of mem-

bers like thoſe of the apoſtolical churches. As to the churches of Galatia, there was no room to give any ſuch command. The apoſtle ſays, Gal. v. 10. "I have confidence in you, through the Lord Jeſus, that you will be none otherwiſe minded." If he had ſuch an opinion of them, and believed that they would comply with his injunctions, where would have been the propriety of giving a command of ſeparation to the few, in caſe of the diſobedience of the many? The error of the judaizing teachers, had indeed infected the body, ſo that the apoſtle found it neceſſary to expreſs his doubt of them *; but he had confidence that they would return to the truth when he called them to it. Nay, he ſuppoſeth the whole matter to ariſe from a very few; "but he that troubleth you, ſhall bear his judgment, whoſoever he be." "I would they were even cut off that trouble you." "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Here he counts upon the allegiance of the great bulk of the members of the churches, and even intimates his wiſh, that the authors of this falſe doctrine ſhould be cut off. In what, then, does this countenance the remaining in a corrupt church? Nay, it is directly againſt it. The apoſtle knew that the greateſt part of them would return to the truth, therefore could not ſuppoſe it neceſſary to adviſe individuals to ſeparate, upon the ſuppoſition that it would be otherwiſe. But the few that ſpread this doctrine, he adviſes to be cut off. This ſhews us what we ſhould do with thoſe who trouble a church with falſe doctrines. They are not, out of falſe lenity, to be ſuffered to remain and corrupt the body, but removed as morbid members.

This objection is entirely founded upon an improper conception of the nature of a church of Chriſt, judging of it as a worldly ſociety, in which the majority is ſuppoſed to be the whole, and is enabled to direct all its proceedings. But it is not numbers, but the *obedient*, that conſtitues the church, whether they be the majority or minority. Had all the members in any one of

* Even this doubting ſhews what he formerly took them to be, when organized as a church.

the Galatian churches, except two or three, reſolved to retain their error, in contempt of the apoſtolic authority, to theſe two or three obedient diſciples the apoſtle's direction was ſtill given, "I would that they were cut off that trouble you."—Obedience is the teſt of diſcipleſhip. Had the majority of any of theſe churches refuſed to obey, the obedient few were bound to "cut off" the diſobedient many. Thoſe few, go where they would, were ſtill the church.

Indeed if it be a duty to "cut off" one or a few diſorderly and troubleſome members, it will ſtill be more ſo with reſpect to many. There is not one argument why three thouſand ſhould cut off three, which will not prove that three ſhould cut off three thouſand, with an acceſſion of ſtrength proportioned to the increaſe of numbers. "If a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," if not purged out, there ſtill is greater reaſon to dread, that the leavened maſs will ſoon infect a few particles. If a whole church is in danger from one, two, or three; one, two, or three muſt be in much greater danger from a corrupt body. What is the reaſon of cutting off one diſorderly member? Is it not leſt he bring a ſcandal upon the religion of Chriſt; be a ſtumbling block to weak Chriſtians; infect the body; become an offence to unbelievers; and to reclaim the individual. Each of theſe reaſons will derive additional ſtrength when applied to numbers.

The ſame reaſoning will hold good with reſpect to the church of Corinth, and the churches of Aſia. The apoſtle addreſſed the Corinthians as "ſaints, ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus;" and every where through his epiſtle conſiders them as true believers, though in many reſpects greatly to blame. How, then, could he ſuppoſe that they would not obey him? This would have been as if the king would ſend an order to the houſe of commons to try one of their members for ſome improper language or conduct, at the ſame time applauding the members for their fidelity and zeal, and then add, "yet if a majority unite to ſcreen the offender, let the faithful minority proteſt." How incongruous would ſuch

language be? Yet not more so than what such objectors would expect from the apostle. After all, I will suppose that the whole church at Corinth had taken part with the incestuous person against the apostle, except one, two, or three, still it would have been the duty of such to have withdrawn from the disorderly society, which no more deserved the name of a church of Christ, than a congregation of Mussulmen. The few that obeyed the apostle were the church, and to them the command was given, 1 Cor. v. 4. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one," &c. The offender, and all who sided with him, were to be removed as disorderly brethren. The same may be said as to the case of the Asiatic churches. To the very worst of them Christ said, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." They were much to blame, but with all their faults, they were true churches of Christ. Nay, the very accusations Christ alleged against them, not only shews the bulk of them to be saints, but proves the necessity of pure communion, and of cutting off impure members. He blames some of them for having the propagators of false doctrines among them. This shews that a church is to purge out the old leaven, and become a new lump. And if he blames them, for having a few false teachers among them, how much more has he had occasion to blame me, for continuing so long with a corrupt body? With what propriety, then, can a Christian allege the state of these churches to justify their continuance in corrupt societies? With what face can any church allege this, to justify impure communion? If these apostolical churches had any improper member among them, they are not praised; they are not held excusable; they are severely reprimanded for it.

2. Another objection is, "that I give up an important station. I cowardly desert the field of battle, and in all probability deprive myself for ever of an opportunity of preaching the gospel. Now Paul says, 'Woe unto me, if I preach not the gospel.' Christ says, 'The harvest is plenteous and the labourers few.'

" It muſt then be highly improper to leave a ripe har-
" veſt without labourers to reap it."

What is the amount of this objection? It is, " Do evil that good may come." If I have ſhewn that ſuch a connexion is ſinful, no ſuppoſed advantages reſulting to religion from it ſhould have the ſmalleſt weight, becauſe they are nothing in reality. What good could I do in any ſituation on earth, without God's bleſſing upon my labours? And is it ſuppoſable that I am likely to have this bleſſing, when I refuſe to obey him? Before my attention was turned to this ſubject, when my views were not ſo clear, God might have partially bleſſed my labours. But I could no longer look for a bleſſing, nor with a good conſcience preach the goſpel at all, while conſcious that I was not complying with his will. " I leave an important ſituation." What ſort of language in the mouth of a Chriſtian? If I had an opportunity of preaching the goſpel in every pariſh in the Iſland, could I of myſelf call one ſinner to repentance? A ſtation is only important as there may be the probability of doing good, and I can ſee no probability of this, as long as we live in the wilful neglect, or the breach of the leaſt part of the known will of God. Ah! friends, I am afraid if we ſearch our hearts to the bottom, the real motive of remaining in corrupt churches, is rather the importance of it to our own temporal intereſt, than a concern leſt the work of the Lord ſhould ſtand undone. " Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our gain." But " I am running as a coward, out of the field of battle." No, I am only repairing to the ſtandard of my captain, and deſerting his enemies. I am only putting myſelf in a ſituation in which I can fight without reſtraint, and whether I am to be an officer or a private, muſt be left to my general, who employs every man in the ſituation that ſuits him beſt, and in which he can render the moſt effectual ſervice. But " is it not a ſin for me to put myſelf out of a condition to preach the goſpel?" Yes, if I would give up preaching the goſpel for the moſt ſplendid throne in Europe, I would be unworthy of opening my mouth to proclaim the glad tidings of ſalvation. If I would quit my ſtation for the

ſake of a little more of the *unrighteous mammon*, I would be inexcuſable. If I would quit preaching for fear of man, "woe would be upon me." But if I quit a ſtation by the command of my general, I am not to blame.

But "the harveſt is great, and the labourers are few." True, very true; and what is the conſequence? Is it that I muſt tranſgreſs the orders of Chriſt to reap the harveſt? Is there no way of obeying one command, without breaking another? Put the objection into words, and it will run thus: "O Lord, thou haſt a great harveſt and few to reap it; I am an active young labourer, but I cannot ſerve thee unleſs thou alloweſt me to break one of thy commandments. It is but a little one, and it is much better for thee to give me this liberty, than to want my ſervices, for thou canſt not do well without me. Thou muſt either take me on theſe terms, or thou muſt loſe thy grain?" Were I to reaſon and act thus, the Lord of the harveſt could ſoon lay me aſide, and let me ſee, he could have the work done without me. It is for us to do what is duty, and leave events to God. If he has any work to do at preſent in Ireland, I am ſure I am taking the way to do it. If he has work to do, who is he moſt likely to employ as his inſtruments? Will he let me ſtand idle in the market place, and employ others to ſerve him, whoſe ſole object is to ſerve themſelves? If it be my ſupreme delight to win ſouls to Chriſt, I do not think I ſhall be diſappointed. If it be in any meaſure my meat and drink to do his will, it is not likely he will refuſe to give me employment. "And whatever we aſk we receive of him, becauſe we keep his commandments, and do thoſe things that are pleaſing in his ſight." "He that loveth me, keepeth my commandments." "Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men." "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you." "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay."

3. No argument hath been more frequently uſed to reconcile me to the ſynod, than "the duty I owe my family. "He that provideth not for his own, eſpe-

" cially for thoſe of his own houſehold, hath denied the " faith, and is worſe than an infidel." I acknowlege the obligation of this ſcripture in its fulleſt extent. But am I obliged to neglect one duty by attending to another? I am to provide for my family; but will any ſay, I ſhould rob and murder to ſupport them? I am to provide, but it is things that are lawful. I am not to ſupport them at the expence of a good conſcience. If I cannot truſt my family upon God, how will I truſt him with my ſoul? He hath not only ſaid, " He that provideth not," &c. but he hath alſo ſaid, " Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you." I muſt either renounce the 6th chap. of Matthew, or I muſt do duty, and truſt myſelf and family to him who feedeth the fowls of the air, and clothes the lilies of the field. He that feedeth his enemies will not ſuffer his friends to ſtarve. With what conſcience could I preſs others to truſt in providence, when I diſtruſted him myſelf? When I read the hiſtory of Ariſtides, the Athenian, and many other pagan ſages, who ſcorned riches for earthly fame, I am aſhamed that the glories of heaven, and the love of Jeſus, ſhould have a ſlighter impreſſion upon me. Cyrus was fed upon brown bread and creſſes, to fit him for a conſummate general; and ſhall I think it a grievance to ſubmit to that diſcipline, to enable me more ſucceſsfully to fight the battles of my Lord. I muſt " endure hardneſs, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt." Perhaps there never was a general of diſtinction, who has not undergone more hardſhips, fatigues, wants, and dangers to procure temporal glory, than I have any proſpect of in my more honourable warfare. " Now they do it for a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible." A few years hence, and all my wants and ſorrows ſhall be no more. I will be where " the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and the weary are at reſt." " They that are wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and they that turn many unto righteouſneſs as the ſtars for ever and ever."

And muſt I part with all I have,
My deareſt Lord for Thee?
It is but right, ſince thou haſt done
Much more than this for me.

Yes, let it go—one look from thee,
Will more than make amends
For all the loſſes I ſuſtain,
Of credit, riches, friends.

Ten thouſand worlds, ten thouſand lives,
How worthleſs they appear,
Compar'd with Thee ſupremely good,
Divinely bright and fair!

Saviour of ſouls! could I from Thee
A ſingle ſmile obtain,
Though deſtitute of all things elſe,
I'd glory in my gain.

FINIS.

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